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FINAL REPORT

Interim Evaluation of the Implementation of the EU Aid Volunteers Initiative

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Table of Contents

List of Figures ..... **iv**

List of Tables ..... **iv**

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations ..... **v**

Abstract ..... **vii**

1 Executive summary **1**

1.1 The EUAV Initiative 1

1.2 Purpose and scope of the evaluation 1

1.3 Methodological approach 2

1.4 Summary Findings 2

1.5 Findings and conclusions by criterion 3

1.6 Main recommendations 5

1.6.1 Strategic and linked operational recommendations 5

1.6.2 Other key recommendations 7

2 Introduction **8**

2.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation 8

2.2 The EUAV Initiative at a glance 8

2.3 Methodological approach 11

2.4 Limitations of the evaluation 14

3 Situation review **15**

3.1 Development of the EUAV Initiative 15

3.2 Management and supervision 16

3.3 Facts and figures of the Initiative 17

3.3.1 Thematic priorities 17

3.3.2 Projects funded under EUAV 18

3.3.3 Candidate volunteers 18

3.4 Output against planning 20

3.4.1 Vacancies for volunteers (2015 – 16) 20

3.4.2 Capacity building projects (2015 – 16) 21

3.4.3 Technical assistance projects (2015 – 16) 22

3.5 Development of certification figures 23

3.6 Achievements in line with the outcomes defined in the Intervention Logic 24

4 Evaluation criteria and questions **27**

4.1 Relevance 27

4.1.1 Fit between the needs of stakeholders and the objectives of the Initiative 28

4.1.2 Fit between objectives and types of action under EUAV 32
4.1.3 Fit between skills of volunteers and the need of hosting organisations 38
4.1.4 Overall conclusions on the extent to which the Initiative is relevant 40
4.2 Coherence 41
4.3 EU Added Value 44
4.4 Effectiveness 47
4.4.1 Achievements of objectives through actions 47
4.4.2 Performance of the communication strategy implementation 54
4.4.3 EUAV reached new organisations and created partnerships 56
4.4.4 Awareness campaign about funding opportunities translated into more response on calls 57
4.4.5 Usefulness of EUAV platform for the recruitment process 59
4.4.6 Priority level of safety and security procedures for volunteers 60
4.4.7 Impact of the trans-European partnership requirements in the calls 61
4.4.8 Overall conclusion on effectiveness 62
4.5 Efficiency 64
4.5.1 Impact of the content and structure of the reference documents on the implementation 64
4.5.2 Monitoring Framework 67
4.5.3 Processes of the Commission / EACEA – Impact on cost-effectiveness and implementation 70
4.5.4 Reflection on the improvement of systemic cost-effectiveness 72
4.5.5 Budget allocated 74
4.5.6 Overall conclusion on efficiency 76
Annex 1 - Bibliography 79
Annex 2 - Organisations contacted 81
Annex 3 - Objectives outlined in the annual work plans for EUAV (2015 – 2017) 85
Annex 4 - Reflection on the establishment of a pool / roster of volunteers 86
Annex 5 - Reflections on wording of the Regulation 88
Annex 6 - Additional analysis of different actions on relevance related to EQ2 89
Annex 7 - Detailed analysis of sub-questions related to EQ3 93
Annex 8 - Case study on Apprenticeship, Recruitment and Deployment 97
Annex 9 - Technical assistance and capacity building case study 107
Annex 10 - Certification case study 117
Annex 11 - Stakeholder Surveys – Results 128
11.1 Survey for EUAV Volunteers 129

11.2 Survey for EUAV European Actors (Sending organisations / others) 139
11.3 Survey for Hosting Organisations 160
11.4 Survey for DG ECHO FPA partners 171
11.5 Survey for Member States representatives 178
Annex 12 - Results of the Open Public Consultation 180
12.1 OPC results from respondents with in-depth knowledge about EUAV 181
12.2 OPC results from respondents without in-depth knowledge about EUAV 200
Annex 13 - Suggestions for the dissemination plan 209
Annex 14 - Comments about the validity of evaluation results 210

List of Figures

Figure 1: Intervention Logic (IL) used for the EUAV Interim Evaluation 10
Figure 2: EUAV Thematic Priorities and Budget Share 17
Figure 3: Candidate volunteers by gender (2015 – 17) 19
Figure 4: Candidate volunteers by age group (2015 – 17) 19
Figure 5: Candidate volunteers by nationality (2015 – 17) 19
Figure 6: Vacancies for EUAV volunteers 2015 – 2017 21
Figure 7: EUAV funds for deployment (allocated and committed) 21
Figure 8: Evolution of the certification figures 2015 - 2017 23
Figure 9: Satisfaction with the level of allowance / compensation 75

List of Tables

Table 1: Thematic priorities and financial envelope of EUAV 11
Table 2: Individual interviews by target group 12
Table 3: Overview on field missions (Asia, Middle-East, and Latin America) 13
Table 4: EUAV implementation stakeholders 16
Table 5: EUAV co-funded projects by type and year (calls for proposal 2015 – 2016) 18
Table 6: EUAV Budget allocated against committed (2015 – 2016) 18
Table 7: Responses to EUAV calls for proposals 2017 20
Table 8: Overview of co-funded capacity building projects (2015 – 16) 22
Table 9: Certifications of hosting organisations related to CB activities (2015 – 2016) 22
Table 10: Overview of co-funded technical assistance projects (2015 – 16) 22
Table 11: Certifications of sending organisations related to TA activities (2015 – 2016) 23
Table 12: Overview on EUAV objectives, stakeholders and types of actions 27
Table 13: Legal framework of the EUAV Initiatives (overview) 64
Table 14: Comparison of average costs per volunteering month 72
Table 15: EUAV funds allocated and committed in the period 2015 - 16 74
Table 16: Objectives of the calls for proposal for technical assistance and capacity building (2015 – 2017) 109
Table 17: Comparison of allocated and committed budget for capacity building and technical assistance projects (2015 – 2017) 109
Table 18: Responses to TA / CB calls for proposal in the period 2015 - 2016 110
Table 19: Total funds allocated for TA / CB by type and year in the period 2015 - 2016 110
Table 20: Capacity Building – Number of certifications as HO during or after CB activities 111
Table 21: Capacity building projects by main type of activity (2015 – 2016) 111

Table 22: Technical Assistance – Number of certifications as SO during or after TA activities..... 114

Table 23: Comparison between FPA and EUAV self-assessment form (source: DG ECHO, EACEA) 123

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BE DRIN	Balkans and Europe for Development of Resilience Initiatives project
BRG	Better Regulation Guidelines
CB	Capacity Building (in the context of this report support of different kinds to third country actors)
COHAFA	Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid
CP	Civil Protection
CPC	Civil Protection Committee
DG DEVCO	Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development
DG ECHO	Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DG ENV	Directorate General Environment
DMC	Disaster Management Cycle (Prevention, Preparedness and Response)
DRM	Disaster Relief Management
EA	Executive Agency
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
EC	European Commission
EEAS	European External Action Service
EM	Evaluation Manger at DG ECHO
EQ	Evaluation Question
EU	European Union
EU13	Countries which became EU members in 2004 or later
EUAV	EU Aid Volunteers or EUAV Initiative
EUAV team	DG ECHO staff in charge of EUAV (Unit A/3)
EUCPT	EU Civil Protection Teams
EVS	European Voluntary Service
EVHAC	Initial acronym of EUAV
FG	Focus Group
FPA	Framework Partnership Agreement
FWC	Framework Contract
HA	Humanitarian Aid
HAC	Humanitarian Aid Committee
HO	Hosting Organisation
IL	Intervention Logic
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
ISG	Inter-service Steering Group
IT	Information Technology
KII	Key informant interview
LEMA	Local Emergency Management Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPC	Open Public Consultation
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PROCIV	Working Party on Civil Protection

SO	Sending Organisation
TA	Technical Assistance (in context of this report: support to EU actors)
ToR	Terms of Reference
UCPM	Union Civil Protection Mechanism
VCM	Volunteering Cycle Management
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

Abstract

The objective of this interim evaluation was to assess the relevance, coherence, EU added value, effectiveness, and efficiency of the implementation of the Regulation establishing the EU Aid Volunteers initiative (EUAV). This evaluation covers the period from mid-2014 to mid-2017. The overall relevance of EUAV measured against its objectives is high. The effectiveness is varied: adequate where it relates to implementation management and supporting services (e.g. training of volunteers, management of grants), but weaker concerning "outreach" components such as attracting enough sending organisations to reach the deployment targets. Capacity Building and Technical Assistance are highly appreciated by the benefiting organisations in the EU and in third countries, and are judged to be effective. The processes established by the Commission, particularly the implementation framework which includes the monitoring framework, can be called efficient. Due to the implementation situation at the time of the evaluation (all projects are still ongoing), no further conclusions can yet be drawn on project efficiency. A clear need for more participation at the level of EU sending organisations was identified. The evaluation provides a set of strategic recommendations (strengthening the coherence and the communication of EUAV) and operational ones (correcting processes or improving the way they work).

1 Executive summary

This report presents the findings, key conclusions and recommendations of the interim evaluation of the EU Aid Volunteers Initiative (EUAV), covering the implementation period mid-2014 – mid-2017. The evaluation was commissioned by DG ECHO in early May 2017 and has been carried out by the Particip Consortium.

1.1 The EUAV Initiative

The Lisbon Treaty, which entered into force in December 2009, provides for the setting up of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps with the objective "to establish a framework for joint contributions from young Europeans to the Humanitarian Aid operations for the Union" (Art 214.5 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU).

After a number of preliminary studies, the corresponding Regulation N° 375/2014 ('the EU Aid Volunteers Initiative' or 'the Initiative') was adopted in order to specify the rules and procedures for the operation of the EUAV. The Initiative is based on the Humanitarian Principles and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, and includes activities such as Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), capacity building and training.

Furthermore, the Delegated Regulation N° 1398/2014 lays down standards for volunteers, and the Implementing Regulation N° 1244/2014 in turn lays down rules for the implementation of the Regulation, including a certification process for the sending and hosting organisations. A monitoring framework has also been developed to measure the progress (six-monthly reports) against the Regulation's objectives, which are stipulated in its Articles 4 and 7 as follows.

- **Overall objective** of the Initiative:

  "to contribute to strengthening the Union's capacity to provide needs-based humanitarian aid aimed at preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering and maintaining human dignity and to strengthening the capacity and resilience of vulnerable or disaster-affected communities in third countries, particularly by means of disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and by enhancing the link between relief, rehabilitation and development".

- **Five operational objectives aim to:**

  (1) Contribute to increasing and improving the capacity of the Union to provide humanitarian aid.
  (2) Improve the skills, knowledge and competences of volunteers in the field of humanitarian aid and the terms and conditions of their engagement.
  (3) Build the capacity of hosting organisations and foster volunteering in third countries.
  (4) Communicate the Union's humanitarian aid principles agreed upon in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.
  (5) Enhance the coherence and consistency of volunteering across Member States in order to improve the opportunities for Union citizens to participate in humanitarian aid activities and operations.

  The Initiative should complement and not duplicate existing national and international voluntary schemes, and should enhance consistency among Member States.

1.2 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

In accordance with Art. 27.4.b of the EUAV Regulation, an interim evaluation of the Initiative has been carried out to cover the first three years of implementation, from **mid-2014 to mid-2017 (reference period)**. This interim evaluation covers the evaluation criteria of Relevance, Coherence,

EU Added Value, Effectiveness and Efficiency/Cost-effectiveness, through a set of **16 evaluation questions (EQs)**, which were framed by the Commission.

1.3 Methodological approach

The interim evaluation of EUAV is an evidence-based evaluation. Particip´s evaluation team consisted of five experienced experts who used a mix-method approach to gather the available information required to respond to the evaluative questions. The evaluation employed the following methods: desk research, document review, key-informant interviews (with the Commission, Member States' representatives, sending organisations, hosting organisations, EUAV volunteers, and other key informants). To allow all implementation stakeholders to participate, 6 targeted surveys[1] were launched, and an Open Public Consultation (OPC) took place to allow other organisations and the broader public to have a say. The evaluators also conducted three field missions (Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle-East, and South-East Asia)[2]. Three case studies on specific components of the EUAV Initiative (i.e. Deployment, Technical Assistance and Capacity Building, and Certification) completed the methodological approach. The evaluation process faced some challenges and limitations mainly because when the evaluation took place, none of the EUAV funded projects were finished, and therefore no report or evaluation was available to the evaluators.

1.4 Summary Findings

The establishment of the EUAV Initiative followed a thorough preparatory phase with studies, stakeholder consultations and other actions to support the design of the Initiative[3]. These efforts aimed to mitigate the concerns expressed by professional humanitarian actors about whether: (i) delivering needs based humanitarian aid through volunteers could be effective and efficient; and (ii) involving young Europeans in humanitarian (response) operations was feasible for security and logistical reasons.

The initial prospective study on EUAV in 2006[4] was followed by a pilot phase (2011-2013) and the adoption of the legislation in 2014, establishing a volunteering scheme at European level. This scheme is in the position to co-finance the deployment of junior and senior expert volunteers, manage deployments in non-response situations, and ensure that sending and hosting organisations act in an accountable way (i.e. working under common European standards for volunteering in the humanitarian sector, which did not exist before). Furthermore, the evaluation revealed cost-conscious behaviour in setting up the implementation framework for EUAV, and found solid evidence that the security and safety of volunteers is a priority at all levels, from the Regulation to the observed deployment situations. European citizens demonstrated a high level of interest in engaging as volunteers[5]. The Technical Assistance and Capacity Building components are greatly appreciated by the EU-based and third country partners, who cite tangible improvements thanks to EUAV projects. Finally, the evaluation can state that the deployment component is working well on the whole.

[1] Target groups of surveys: EUAV volunteers (candidates and deployed); EUAV Sending Organisations and their partners; EUAV Hosting Organisations; DG ECHO FPA partners (those not yet engaged); EUAV pilot project partners (those not yet engaged); and Member States Representatives (COHAFA, HAC, and PROCIV)

[2] Latin America and Caribbean: Haiti and Ecuador; Middle-East: Jordan and Lebanon; and South-East Asia: Myanmar and Cambodia (all missions took place in July 2017)

[3] Amongst others the most important are listed here: 2 preparatory studies (2006 and 2010), an open public consultation (2010), an impact assessment (2012), a pilot phase with 12 projects (2011 – 13) of different types, the evaluation of pilot projects (2014), needs assessments (2014), preparatory actions (2013 – 14) and the formal legislative procedure to establish the legal framework of the EUAV Initiative

[4] European Commission / Prolog Consult, "Review Concerning the Establishment of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps", March 2006

[5] In the context of one specific EUAV deployment contract, on average 33 volunteer applications were received for each vacancy established by the EUAV partners.

In spite of these successes, it can be noted that the level of buy-in of EU professional humanitarian organisations is clearly lower than it needs to be if the EUAV Initiative's deployment targets are to be reached[6]. There have been well-coordinated and comprehensive efforts to inform and communicate with the wider sector by DG ECHO/EACEA, but acceptance by, and engagement from a larger part of the existing partners of the EU humanitarian system has not been forthcoming. The evaluation revealed that the perception of EUAV's place in the humanitarian sector is not always clear to stakeholders and that its alignment with regular humanitarian assistance is not yet sufficiently developed. To date, for the third year in a row, funds allocated for deployments remain partly unspent and subsequently the planned deployment numbers have not been achieved[7]. In 2017, certification of sending and hosting organisations has built momentum, which is a very positive sign for the actual number of volunteer vacancies to meet the Initiative´s targets, although there is a need for more organisations to continue their commitment by deploying volunteers.

In the light of these findings, based on the in-depth review of how the EUAV Initiative works today, the evaluation proposes corrective measures at both strategic and operational levels which should help DG ECHO to address the needs for change that were identified in the evaluation.

1.5 Findings and conclusions by criterion

This chapter highlights the most important findings and conclusions for each evaluation criterion

Relevance - When analysing the relevance of the EUAV Initiative, the evaluation team concentrated on assessing the relevance of the five established operational objectives of EUAV[8] against the different needs identified. The evaluation concludes that the Initiative is highly relevant. First, the needs highlighted in the Impact Assessment[9] are being directly addressed by the actions of EUAV. Second, the objectives are relevant to their intended stakeholders, particularly in regard to strengthening capacity. Third, all the types of action identified in the Regulation help to fulfil the objectives to an extent which justifies their funding by the EUAV Initiative. It is understood that not all objectives are formulated to be relevant to every stakeholder, and not every type of funded action is constructed to be relevant to every objective.

Coherence - The evaluation's analysis of the coherence of EUAV with other related EU activities (emergency humanitarian response, development assistance, civil protection) revealed room for improvement. The Initiative is not fully aligned with the main EU humanitarian aid processes (e.g. global needs analysis, planning of actions and engagement of professional sector actors). To date there is only informal coordination with the EU development actors (e.g. DG DEVCO), and the evaluation has identified potential opportunities for cooperation and alignment, especially as regards contributing to the implementation of the EU´s Joint Strategic Approach to Resilience[10]. With respect to civil protection, EUAV shows a few examples of cooperation with EU civil protection actors (i.e. one EU national civil protection body active in an EUAV funded project and another certified as an EUAV sending organisation), but there is also a potential for improved coherence in this area.

[6] Initial targets of the EUAV Initiative to be achieved until 2020: 4,000 volunteers deployed, 10,000 online volunteering opportunities, and 4,400 volunteers and NGO staff from third countries participating in capacity building.

[7] Situation with respect to vacancies for volunteers (2015 – 16): 44 volunteers deployed during the period 2015 until June 2017 (latest figures show 111 deployments until October 2017), funds allocated for 700 vacancies in the period 2015 and 2016; actually 206 vacancies created by EUAV implementing partners (of 16.8 m EURO allocated 10.6 m EURO remained unspent from the budget foreseen for deployment). This trend continues in 2017 with approx. 175 vacancies (instead of 525 planned) and about 50% of the available budget unspent (however with an increasing number of single contracts and therefore EU SO applicants).

[8] Outlined during the setting-up of the EUAV Initiative - based on identified needs, which are documented in the Intervention Logic (IL) of the Initiative

[9] European Commission, "Impact Assessment / Proposal for a Regulation / Establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps", COM(2012) 514 final, September 2012

[10] Joint Communication JOIN(2017) 21 final of 7th June 2017 "A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's external action".

EU Added Value - The centralised management of EUAV by the Commission provides added value in terms of an integrated transnational approach, a budget for EU level technical assistance and more project opportunities. The standard of volunteer management established by EUAV can be called a European standard as it is mandatory for all deployment grant applicants, and promoted at EU level. The quality of training provided by EUAV to their volunteers is also a clear added value compared to other existing volunteering schemes. There is, however, no evidence that the EUAV Initiative has significantly enhanced EU visibility and image at public level in the EU so far. A significant proportion of interviewed stakeholders, survey respondents and also some Member States' representatives do not fully agree with the statement that "What EUAV aims to achieve cannot be achieved by other Member States' initiatives"[11].

Effectiveness - The evaluation found that the effectiveness of EUAV varies between the different elements of the Initiative. Those elements of EUAV related to processes and administration show good effectiveness levels, e.g. implementation framework, processes and procedures, contract management, technical and procedural information to stakeholders, training of volunteers and skills development. To date the Initiative shows limited effectiveness in relation to "outreach" components such as the engagement of professional humanitarian actors, the external communication of the Union's humanitarian principles, or the enhancement of coherence and consistency of volunteering across Member States. With respect to deployment (a core aspect of EUAV, where figures are significantly below target), the EUAV Initiative has not proved effective during the first half of its first implementation cycle.

Efficiency - The Regulations[12] which govern EUAV, and therefore dictate the processes to be followed by EUAV partners, are often perceived as complex, e.g. the need for certification , list of eligible countries, list of eligible activities, and long periods before deployment. However, they are mostly complex because the Commission takes its responsibility for volunteers seriously. Based on findings, the evaluation can conclude that DG ECHO, together with the Executive Agency EACEA13, have managed to establish a functioning implementation framework where continuous attempts to reduce complexity have led to visible improvements over time such as the reduction of the number of partners required for EUAV grant application[14]. The established monitoring framework is complex but workable, although some unviable indicators[15] should be reviewed. As stated above, the evaluation identified cost-conscious behaviours (i) within DG ECHO / EACEA, for example requesting grant applicants to expressly comment on cost-effectiveness, and (ii) through service contracts: those drawn up for training and insurance of volunteers mostly use variable cost positions.

Overall, the establishment and the implementation of the Initiative, based on the requirements laid down in the EUAV Regulations, can be deemed to be efficient[16].

[11] Survey results are presented in the Annex [11] to the report and further evidence can be found in the relevant chapter in the report body.

[12] **Regulation (EU) No 375/2014** of 3rd April 2014 establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps ("EU Aid Volunteers initiative"); **Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1398/2014** of 24 October 2014 laying down standards regarding candidate volunteers and the EU Aid Volunteers; **Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1244/2014** of 20 November 2014 laying down the rules for the implementation of the regulation (EU) No 375/2014

[13] Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

[14] Initial partnership requirements reduced from 3 EU partners and 3 third country partners in 2015 to 2 EU and 2 third country partners as from 2016 for the deployment calls for proposal and in 2017 also for capacity building projects.

[15] An example is the following outcome indicator: "Average cost per person reached by humanitarian aid projects to which the EUAV initiative contributes" (impossible to get sensible / comparable information)

[16] This statement excludes costs-effectiveness analysis at project level, which was not in the scope of the evaluation.

1.6 Main recommendations

1.6.1 Strategic and linked operational recommendations

The strategic recommendations are based on the key conclusions and they address shortcomings and challenges identified, in a holistic way. Related operational recommendations[17] are provided under each strategic recommendation. Altogether, the strategic recommendations below represent a comprehensive and mutually reinforcing framework for action.

(1) Improve promotion and communication of EUAV to stimulate interest, to create extended understanding and to improve engagement of organisations

The evaluation revealed that even EUAV-certified sending organisations sometimes did not fully understand the scope, functioning and opportunities provided by EUAV and its funding. At the same time, many of those actors not yet engaged (e.g. DG ECHO FPA partners), expressed interest in learning more about activities, achievements and opportunities of EUAV. Linked with the need for more EU actors to engage in deployment, these findings lead to a clear call for improved EUAV promotion and communication actions. The related operational recommendations include:

- Involvement of a marketing and communication professional in the EUAV team[18]; *(R4.5)*[19]
- Establishment of an annual action plan for marketing and communication including a media plan; *(R4.5)*
- Clarification for EUAV partners (in the EU and in third countries) of the communication measures they are expected to take, based on the annual action plan for marketing and communication;*(R1.3)*
- Improvement in communication monitoring (collection of clippings / monitoring of postings / continued collection of visitor statistics and the preparation of a report summarising achievements – with the optional employment of professional media monitoring);*(R4.6)*
- Formulation of information packages aimed at specific groups, particularly those not currently engaged. This would include alignment / progress stories (e.g. regular humanitarian aid / civil protection activities carried out with EUAV volunteer support) and "scenarios of engagement" showing how EUAV can, for example, support organisations' career development schemes or volunteers' employment prospects – and targeted dissemination at the right time / right place.*(R2.2 / R4.7)*

(2) Establish better alignment and coherence with regular EU humanitarian assistance, the EU civil protection mechanism and EU development assistance

Coherence was identified by the evaluation as an important challenge. Coherence with the EU humanitarian system is still relatively low, and an important segment of the professional humanitarian actors (e.g. FPA partners) does not yet see the added value and use of EUAV as strengthening the Union´s capacity to provide needs-based humanitarian aid. Also, coherence with other related fields such as EU development assistance and civil protection shows high potential for improvement. It is recommended that DG ECHO intensifies pro-active measures to achieve better integration of EUAV in regular DG ECHO actions (in line with the Regulation). Recommended actions are listed below:

- Enhanced promotion of EUAV as an integrated instrument of the EU humanitarian system. This should be done at all levels of DG ECHO, including field offices,[20] other sector actors such as NOHA, and humanitarian NGO and UN agencies networks; *(R4.8)*

[17] Some of the recommendations require changes to the EUAV Regulations

[18] Marketing is a bigger concept than communication: it determines the tactics of communication and ensures communications reach potential stakeholders according to their needs and expectations and in addition shapes the "product / offer" based on needs.

[19] The R symbol shows where the related recommendation is featured in the main report, referring to the evaluation criteria: R1.= Relevance; R2.=Coherence; R3.=EU Added Value; R4.= Effectiveness; R5.=Efficiency.

- Formulation of targeted calls for proposals (on top of the general / open deployment calls), guided by the needs identified in the DG ECHO global and specific needs assessments, in areas where these relate to activities permitted under the EUAV Regulation (e.g. DIPECHO type projects, DRR, strengthening of the local partners of FPA partners in line with the Localisation Agenda of the Grand Bargain);*(R4.3)*
- Taking forward discussions with DG DEVCO on how to cooperate in the context of the implementation of the Strategic Approach to Resilience[21] and to add value to the process through potential EUAV involvement (e.g. in deployment and/ or capacity building*).(R2.1)*

(3) Establish a knowledge management system (KMS) based on a structured and institutionalised learning and dissemination process, which would continuously improve implementation processes, and would particularly contribute to sector wide dissemination of achievements and lessons learned.

EUAV creates knowledge through its activities as it is new and somewhat unique with what it intends to achieve; EUAV implementing partners try different ways to ensure the sensible and impactful involvement of volunteers in humanitarian aid: therefore the EUAV Initiative is a potential source of interesting information and lessons learned for the humanitarian sector. It is recommended that this knowledge be collected, documented and disseminated in a proactive way. In this context, the following operational recommendations are provided:

- Establish a knowledge management system for the EUAV Initiative (including a concept to collect and select information and a tool[22] to store and disseminate the information*);(R5.3)*
- Make brief and structured ex-post evaluations of EUAV funded actions mandatory (some exceptions may be possible based on criteria such as funding size, for example), to become a major source of information for the KMS *;(R5.3)*
- Gather, in a structured way, lessons learned from actions (and knowledge produced by actions), research and evaluations; and provide it in an accessible and user-friendly way to EUAV partners and interested sector actors (e.g. in the form of a searchable webpage on the internet linked to or integrated in the EUAV platform);(*R4.1)*

Prevent the duplication of work done under EUAV funding by providing all (public) outcomes through an adequate tool such as a searchable archive for selected documents on the EUAV internet platform, for grant applicants to check on work already done.

(4) Initiate action to shift gradually from funding processes (supporting volunteer management or organisational capability and capacity) to humanitarian impact-oriented activities

The focus of EUAV is, presently, first and foremost on organisational capacity and then on humanitarian outcomes. The second focus requires the first, and the link EUAV has made between the two has provided it with a solid base from which to grow. However, evaluators found representatives from all the main stakeholder groups (including the volunteers themselves and the organisations which have not engaged in EUAV) hoping for a greater focus on impact at community / beneficiary level. Examples of measurable impacts would be humanitarian outcomes such as transformation of beneficiary/ community lives or opportunities, or resilience, but also volunteer career paths or increases in organisational strength or capacity. To attract the committment of sending organisations, the recommendation is therefore to increase the focus on humanitarian impact in the next implementation phase until 2020, and beyond.

[20] The evaluation note positive feedback from DG ECHO field offices during the field visits, with respect to get involved in the EUAV.
[21] Joint Communication JOIN(2017)21 final of 7th June 2017, "A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU´s external action"
[22] E.g. as an extension of the EUAV platform on the internet

- As a first step, DG ECHO is recommended to inform their sending and hosting organisation (SO/HO) partners about lessons learned and good practice from major SOs who have shifted from administration tasks for volunteers to more community / beneficiary impact-oriented actions.
- Change the e-forms for deployment grants to allow applicants to identify projects as either 'capacity-strengthening for HO' or 'direct community / beneficiary impact'. In addition, the basic occupation of the volunteers could be categorised in the e-form;*(R5.5)*
- At the appropriate time, change the Regulation to allow flexibility in fund allocation, ensuring that deployment can take a greater proportion of the budget if demand requires it.
- As competition for deployment grants increases, the calls for proposal should make clear that projects which focus on having an impact on end-beneficiaries, as opposed to supporting HO capacity, will be prioritised.
- Ensure, through the calls for proposal, that technical assistance and capacity building projects are more closely linked to certification and deployment. DG ECHO cannot force an organisation to certify or be part of a deployment consortium, but the efficiency of EUAV will be hugely improved if there is a link made clear to applicants at the beginning. (R1.4)

1.6.2 Other key recommendations

Further important operational recommendations, which are not directly related to the strategic recommendations, are provided below.

Deployment

On the whole, the processes related to the deployment of volunteers are functioning well. There are some possible areas of improvement highlighted in the case study, of which the following summaries are the most substantive:

- Action needs to be taken to reduce the time between vacancy announcement and deployment, to reduce drop-outs;*(R1.6)*
- Action needs to be taken to ensure that the volunteer is fulfilling a real need, and that their expectations are realistic, given the possible eighteen-month gap between needs assessment and deployment;*(R1.7)*
- Recruiting candidate volunteers to a roster, as opposed to recruitment against vacancies, should be considered in order to speed up the deployment process. *(R1.3 / R4.2)*
- The system of deciding on allowances needs to be reconsidered as many volunteers are dissatisfied.*(R5.6)*

Implementation framework

- **Enhance the monitoring by implementing mid-term checks** on core issues related to the volunteer management standards. The evaluation revealed that these standards have not always been regarded by EUAV partners and there are currently limited means to identify shortcomings during deployments. It is recommended to ask volunteers a limited number of questions at the mid-term point of their assignment, concerning issues such as degree of satisfaction with the learning and development plans, with safety and security measures, or satisfaction with the placement.*(R1.2 / R4.4)*
- **Improve the accessibility of the e-forms, and simplify them.** The majority of the interviewed stakeholders had significant problems in accessing and using the e-forms provided to apply for grants. The dissatisfaction with this system risks spreading negative messages about the complexity of the EUAV procedures.*(R5.1 / R5.3)*
- **Foster the learning and improvement / simplification process**es, by building on the existing network to establish a bi-annual focus group to support process simplification and "customer care". The objective would be to continuously improve efficiency by involving implementing stakeholders and potential certification applicants.*(R5.2)*

2 Introduction

This report presents the findings, key conclusions and recommendations of the interim evaluation of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative (EUAV), covering the implementation period mid-2014 – mid-2017. The evaluation was commissioned by DG ECHO in early May 2017 and has been carried out by the Particip Consortium.

2.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

In accordance with Art. 27.4.b of the EUAV Regulation (N° 375/2014, Article 27) an interim evaluation of the EUAV Initiative was carried out to cover the first three years of implementation, from **mid-2014 to mid-2017 (reference period)**. The evaluation covers the evaluation criteria of Relevance, Coherence, EU Added Value, Effectiveness and Efficiency/Cost-effectiveness, through a set of **16 evaluation questions (EQs)**, which have been framed by DG ECHO.

On the basis of evidence-based conclusions for each criterion, the evaluation provides five key strategic recommendations, supported by some detailed operational recommendations for the following key users: European Commission, the Executive Agency EACEA, implementing partners and other stakeholders. Some of the recommendations directly focus on the Initiative's outreach and achievement of implementation targets within the current Multi-Annual Financial Framework, until 2020.

In addition to the above tasks, the evaluation carried out a number of supplementary tasks, including the following, to name the most important:

- Formulation of a 12-week Open Public Consultation (OPC), compliant with the requirements of the Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines (BRG)
- Formulation of a Consultation Strategy in accordance with BRG requirements, to cover all consultation tasks and explain how all relevant stakeholder groups are properly reached.
- An analysis of the potential to reduce inefficiencies, including the regulatory burden, and to simplify interventions.
- Provision of a reconstructed intervention logic (see 2.2).
- Delivery of three case studies, not for publication, which inform EUAV-focused staff at DG ECHO and EACEA about the current state of key areas of the Initiative.

2.2 The EUAV Initiative at a glance

The Lisbon Treaty, which entered into force in December 2009, provides for the setting up of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps with the objective "to establish a framework for joint contributions from young Europeans to the Humanitarian Aid operations for the Union" (Art 214.5 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU).

After a number of preliminary studies, the corresponding Regulation N° 375/2014 ('the EU Aid Volunteers initiative' or 'the Initiative') was adopted in order to specify the rules and procedures for the operation of the EUAV. The Initiative is based on the Humanitarian Principles and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, and includes activities such as Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), capacity building and training.

Furthermore, the Delegated Regulation N° 1398/2014 lays down standards for volunteers and the Implementing Regulation N° 1244/2014 in turn lays down rules for the implementation of the Regulation, including a certification process for the sending and hosting organisations. A monitoring framework has also been developed, based on the Initiative's Intervention Logic (IL)

presented in Figure 1 hereunder, to measure the progress (six-monthly reports) against the Regulation's objectives, which are stipulated in its Articles 4 and 7 as follows.

- **Overall objective** of the Initiative:

  "to contribute to strengthening the Union's capacity to provide needs-based humanitarian aid aimed at preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering and maintaining human dignity and to strengthening the capacity and resilience of vulnerable or disaster-affected communities in third countries, particularly by means of disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and by enhancing the link between relief, rehabilitation and development".

- **Five operational objectives aim to:**

  (1) Contribute to increasing and improving the capacity of the Union to provide humanitarian aid.

  (2) Improve the skills, knowledge and competences of volunteers in the field of humanitarian aid and the terms and conditions of their engagement.

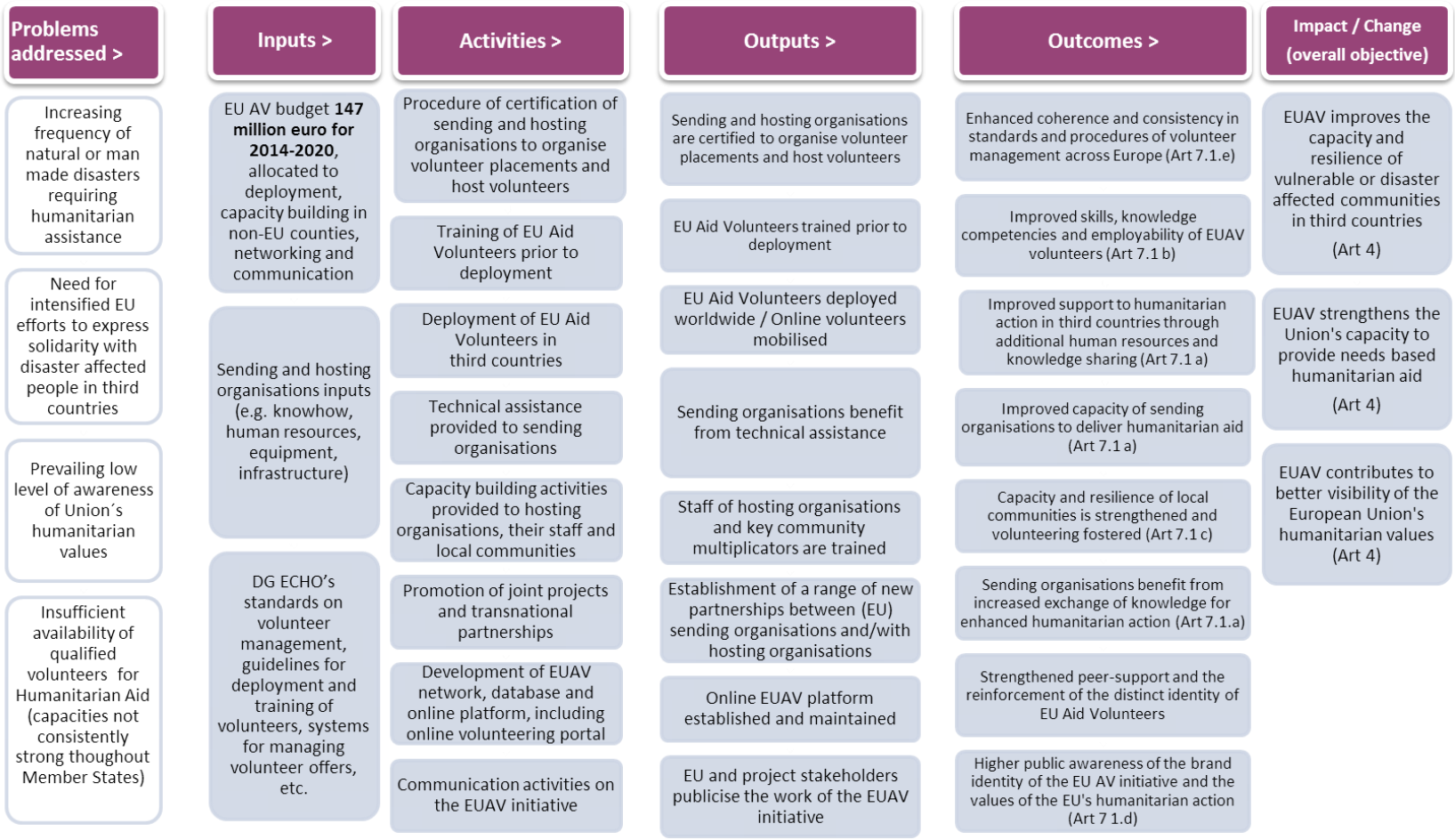
  (3) Build the capacity of hosting organisations and foster volunteering in third countries.

  (4) Communicate the Union's humanitarian aid principles agreed upon in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

  (5) Enhance the coherence and consistency of volunteering across Member States in order to improve the opportunities for Union citizens to participate in humanitarian aid activities and operations.

  The Initiative should complement and not duplicate existing national and international voluntary schemes, and should enhance consistency among Member States.

Figure 1: Intervention Logic (IL) used for the EUAV Interim Evaluation



Remark: The intervention logic describes how the Initiative is expected to work. The evaluation of the EUAV pilot projects from 2014[23], established the EUAV intervention logic. The monitoring framework[24] currently applied is based on this IL in order to enable the Initiative´s performance to be measured. For the sake of clarity, the evaluation team has reviewed the intervention logic being used for the EUAV Initiative and has slightly adapted / extended the version currently used by adding the "problems addressed" as they were formulated.

[23] DG ECHO / ICF Study, "Evaluation of the Pilot Action of EU Aid Volunteers – Final Report", **June 2014**
[24] DG ECHO, "Framework for the monitoring of the implementation of the action under the EU Aid Volunteer Initiative", Ref. Ares(2015)4055718 - 01/10/2015", **October 2015**

The EUAV Initiative aims to achieve the defined operational and overall objectives with three main pillars of activities, which are defined in Annex 1 of the Regulation as "thematic priorities". This definition also includes percentages to be allocated by thematic priority. The themes defined by the Regulation are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Thematic priorities and financial envelope of EUAV

ID	Thematic priority (according to Regulation)	Indicated eligible activities / actions	% of total budget	Permitted variation	Total for 2014 – 20 in EURO	Annual average in EURO
1	**Deployment of volunteers**	Resilience building	31%	+/- 10%	45,570,000	6,510,000
		Support Emergency Response	10%	+/- 8%	14,700,000	2,100,000
2	**Capacity building**	Training and apprenticeship candidate volunteers	55%	+/-10%	80,850,000	11,550,000
		Capacity building host organisations / Certification support				
		Technical assistance to sending organisations / Certification support				
3	**Support measures**	Communication, auxiliary	4%	+/-2%	5,880,000	840,000
		Total	**100%**		**147,000,000**	**21,000,000**

Next to the exercise of answering the EQs, the evaluation also focused on all thematic priorities and conducted dedicated case studies for the deployment component, the technical assistance and capacity building component, and the certification component (provided in Annex 8 - Case study on Apprenticeship, Recruitment and Deployment and Annex 10 - Certification case study of the report).

2.3 Methodological approach

The present interim evaluation is an evidence-based evaluation. An evaluation team composed of five experienced experts used a mix-method approach to gather the available information to be able to answer the evaluative questions and to formulate case studies on the essential components of the EUAV Initiative.

Covering the EUAV establishment and implementation activities of the first three years of the Initiative (mid-2014 – mid-2017), the evaluation employed the following methods.

Literature review and research

The evaluation team collected a large amount of secondary information such as reports, studies, and recent research, and conducted an in-depth analysis of project-related information and documentation (i.e. Regulations, preparatory studies, monitoring reports, reports of the Commission and others). The relevant quantitative and qualitative information was derived from these sources and used for the analysis work. A complete bibliography is provided in Annex 1 - Bibliography to the report.

Key-informant interviews

The evaluation team managed to interview a substantial number of informants from all relevant stakeholder groups; altogether more than 120 individual interviews with representatives of 52 organisations were conducted. Interviews were also held with DG ECHO officers, officials from other DGs and Agencies of the Commission, Member States representatives and other stakeholders. The following table provides the details of these interviews.

Table 2: Individual interviews by target group

Stakeholder group	Individual Interviews	Organisations / Institutions
EUAV Sending Organisations / EU partners / Recipients of TA	41	15
EUAV Hosting Organisations	26	22
EUAVs (deployed and during training)	20	n/a
European Commission and Services (including: DG ECHO and its RSO / Country Offices, DG DEVCO, DG EAG, EEAS, and EACEA)	18	5
Sector Service Organisations & Associations / Universities	8	4
Member States Representatives	4	2
Others (e.g. FPA / FAFA, Training Consortium)	5	4
Total	**122**	**52**

In addition, focus group meetings were organised with EACEA staff in order to provide the evaluation team with the level of information necessary to carry out their tasks. In this respect, the evaluation can report on excellent support provided by the EACEA staff.

The list of organisations and functions of persons interviewed is provided in Annex 2 - Organisations contacted.

Stakeholder surveys

The evaluation team prepared 6 targeted surveys to support the base of evidence and to allow all key-stakeholders to contribute and to participate. The surveys targeted the following stakeholder groups:

(1) DG ECHO FPA partner (INGOs), not engaged in EUAV / not having participated in pilot projects as lead nor partner

(2) Partners in the pilot phase (not yet engaged in EUAV)

(3) EUAV European Partners / Actors (all EU organisations which are certified, and/or having received TA, and / or partners providing specific TA, etc.)

(4) EUAV Hosting Organisations (third country partner organisations which have received capacity building assistance and / or hosted volunteers)

(5) EUAV Volunteers (selected, trained, about to be trained, deployed, and returned)

(6) Member States representatives (HAC / COHAFA / ProCIV)

Surveys 1-4 were launched by the Particip Consortium. Survey 6 (Member States Representatives) was handled by DG ECHO. The EUAV volunteers (survey 5) were directly invited by EACEA, to keep data / contacts of volunteers confidential. The surveys were launched mid-July and several reminders were sent out before closure in mid-September.

The survey response statistics and the survey results are provided in Annex 11 - Stakeholder Surveys – Results.

Field missions

Altogether, three separate field missions were conducted by the evaluation team members. The locations were selected based on dedicated criteria[25] approved by DG ECHO. The selected field missions provided first hand insights on how the deployment of volunteers worked and which situations they are hosted and involved in. Furthermore, the team members looked at the effects of capacity building on host organisations and on communities (where relevant).

Table 3: Overview on field missions (Asia, Middle-East, and Latin America)

Field Mission	Organisations	Remark / specific issues
Haiti and Ecuador	Mouvement des Paysan de Papaye (MPP) ACTED Haiti Concern Worldwide - Haiti Fundación Alianza por los Derechos, la Igualdad y la Solidaridad Internacional – Haiti Fundación Alianza por los Derechos, la Igualdad y la Solidaridad Internacional – Ecuador Gruppo di Volontariato Civile (GVC) – Haiti Caritas Ecuador FOCSIV Ecuador Ecuasol DG ECHO Field Offices, Haiti and Ecuador	• Deployment / hosting of volunteers (including group deployment to Ecuador) • Recipient organisations / communities interviews
Jordan and Lebanon	ACTED Fondación Alianza Institute for Family Health (IFH) Jordan GVC ACTED Lebanon Concern Worldwide - Lebanon Gruppo di Volontariato Civile (GVC) – Lebanon	• EUAVs/ projects near to humanitarian hotspots (e.g. Syria crisis) • Recipient organisations / communities interviews
Cambodia and Myanmar	ACTED DanChurchAid ACTED - Cambodia DanChurchAid - Cambodia Finn Church Aid - Cambodia Gruppo di Volontariato Civile (GVC) – Cambodia Life With Dignity – Cambodia People in Need - Cambodia VSO	• Capacity building focus and deployment

The findings of the field missions are contained in the case studies, and as evidence and "small cases" in the responses to the EQs under each evaluation criterion. The list of organisations contacted during the field missions is provided in Annex 2 - Organisations contacted.

Case studies

The evaluation prepared three case studies on core components of the EUAV Initiative (deployment, technical assistance and capacity building, and certification). These case studies are provided in Annex 8 - Case study on Apprenticeship, Recruitment and Deployment to the report.

Open Public Consultation

The implementation of an Open Public Consultation (OPC) is a mandatory requirement of the Better Regulation Guidelines. The evaluation prepared the questionnaires (short and long version) and provided these to DG ECHO for the coding and launch of the OPC. The OPC attracted in total 30 responses until its closure on 31st October 2017. The results of the OPC are presented in Annex 12 - Results of the Open Public Consultation.

[25] i.e. coverage in terms of number of projects in a country, coverage of thematic priorities, geographical coverage (Asia, Middle East, and Caribbean and Latin America), variety of different SO / HO partners implementing the projects, and presence of volunteers at times of visits.

2.4 Limitations of the evaluation

The interim evaluation of the EUAV Initiative faced several challenges, including the short evaluation period (May – September 2017)[26] and particularly the fact that almost all co-funded activities (deployment grants, technical assistance and capacity building under the Initiative) were still ongoing – with no final report yet available (with the consequence that, in particular, the analysis of effectiveness was limited.

Wherever possible, the evaluation team used research and secondary information to mitigate the impact of missing ex-post information.

In addition, the Initiative is far from operating at full capacity, which makes it difficult to comment on effectiveness and efficiency where several aspects are concerned, e.g.

- budget sufficiency for operation at full capacity,
- operability and service performance at full capacity[27], and
- the selection of projects for co-funding by thematic priority under competitive conditions.

Furthermore, there are considerable misconceptions about EUAV due to its complexity, even among the staff of the certified organisations. This meant that evaluators had to sift through a large amount of feedback that was not always relevant.

Despite these challenges, the evaluation succeeded in getting a good insight into the on-going activities of EUAV during the field missions and visits to training events but also through the excellent support from the teams of DG ECHO and the Executive Agency EACEA.

[26] The evaluation road map indicates a start date in **Q4/2016** (Ref. Ares(2017)2585948 - 22/05/2017)

[27] During the interim evaluation period, only 44 of initially 700 planned deployments for 2015 and 2016 have actually started. In October 2017 the number of deployments reached 111 as reported by the EACEA.

3 Situation review

3.1 Development of the EUAV Initiative

The following table provides an overview of the essential events and milestones in the development of the EUAV Initiative (EUAV). The formal development process started in 2005 with the first prospective study on the European Volunteer Aid Corps and led to the EUAV Initiative being implemented today, having started in 2014 with the adoption of the legal framework of the Initiative.

2005- 2006	Prospective study on the establishment of EVHAC
2009	Ratification of the Lisbon Treaty "European Treaty" (with Article 214.5 requesting the establishment of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps)
2010	Study in support of the establishment of EVHAC
2011	Open Public Consultation EVHAC (basic implementation options included)
2011	Stakeholder Conference in Budapest, Hungary (EU Presidency of Hungary)
2011 – 2013	Pilot Phase (12 projects in three rounds at a total value of about 6.5 m EURO involving 277 volunteers for a total of 1,480 volunteer months)
2012	EUAV Impact Assessment
2013 – 2014	Preparatory Actions for EUAV (Training / Competences / Capacity Building; Volunteer Management Standards and Certification; and Employee Volunteering)
2014	Needs Assessment (knowledge, skills and competences needed in the humanitarian sector)
2014	Pilot Action Evaluation (design of the monitoring framework)
2014	**Legal framework of the EU Aid Volunteers Initiative** Regulation (EU) No 375/2014 of 3rd April 2014 establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps ("EU Aid Volunteers initiative") Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1398/2014 of 24 October 2014 laying down standards regarding candidate volunteers and the EU Aid Volunteers Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1244/2014 of 20 November 2014 laying down the rules for the implementation of the regulation (EU) No 375/2014
2014	Delegation of implementing tasks to the Executive Agency EACEA
2015	Initial calls for proposals (Deployment / Technical Assistance and Capacity Building) – continued on an annual basis (three rounds to date: 2015, 2016 and 2017)
2017	Interim Evaluation of the EUAV Initiative

3.2 Management and supervision

The EUAV Initiative involves a number of implementation stakeholders, who, for better understanding, are listed in the following table with their respective areas of responsibility and processes owned.

Table 4: EUAV implementation stakeholders

Stakeholder	Processes	Deliverables	Reference	Remarks
DG ECHO – A/3 - Disaster Risk Reduction, European Voluntary Humanitarian Corps	**Overall process owner** - Alignment with regular HA / DRR policy via annual work programme participation and approval	Annual work programme EUAV Annual reports from the Commission to the Council and European Parliament	EUAV Regulation	- regular meetings at Head of Unit and Directors level with EACEA
DG ECHO – EUAV Team (Team under A/3 working on EUAV issues)	- Overall coordination of EUAV - Overall communication of EUAV - Partners and volunteers´ network - collaboration / guidance to EACEA on all elements of the EUAV Initiative[28] Internet / Platform / Online volunteering component		EUAV Regulation	- 3 full-time staff positions within DG ECHO - Detailed task sharing provided in Annex 6
EACEA, Executive Agency	EACEA is responsible for the calls for proposals, calls for tender, contract management, and for implementing the corresponding budget appropriations in line with the annual work programmes adopted by the Commission. EACEA areas of responsibility at a glance: - Certification process - Technical assistance - Capacity building - Deployment - Involvement of external evaluators (calls for proposals and certification applications) - Training programme - Insurance service contract	Provision of a 6 monthly monitoring report (based on the requirements in the Monitoring Framework of the Initiative. Annual report Financial report(s)	Commission Decision C(2013)9189 – 1812.2013 & MoU with parent DGs, incl. DG ECHO Working Arrangement on monitoring tasks (Ares(2015)4055718-01/10/2015)	- About 7 full time staff members - regular interaction with DG ECHO - clear lines of communication and fixed meeting schedules - capable of organising the management of the grant scheme
DG ECHO – A/4 Civil Protection Policy	Alignment with Civil Protection Policy and Actions	Contribution to Annual work programme EUAV		

[28] e.g. in the drafting of the calls, participation in the evaluation committees, participation in meetings to brief the external evaluators, providing guidance to projects, clarifying upcoming legal questions, approval of awarding and funding decisions, signature of certification decisions, overall design and content / revision of the training programme, participation in each face-to-face training as owner of the initiative, drafting rules for critical incident management, amendment of e-Forms, adaptation of the monitoring framework, deciding on all safety and security questions from projects, development and management of the EUAV Platform (vacancy announcements, learning and development plan, database / roster, mentoring), etc.)

Stakeholder	Processes	Deliverables	Reference	Remarks
HAC EU Member States Committee	Comitology procedure requesting the Commission to seek the opinion of the Member States through the Committee	Provision of Member States opinion	Regulation	
European Parliament	Supervision (Examining the progress made in implementing the Regulation)	Supervision of implementation	Regulation	Basis for supervision: Annual EUAV Reports / Evaluation Reports
Council (Member States)	Supervision (Examining the progress made in implementing the Regulation)	Supervision of implementation	Regulation	Basis for supervision: Annual EUAV Reports / Evaluation Reports

DG ECHO has established an implementation workflow[29] which covers all essential processes. The Executive Agency EACEA has established different workflows / guidelines for their internal key-processes, which are also well documented, clear and concise (i.e. selection workflow TA/CB, certification workflow, selection workflow deployment).

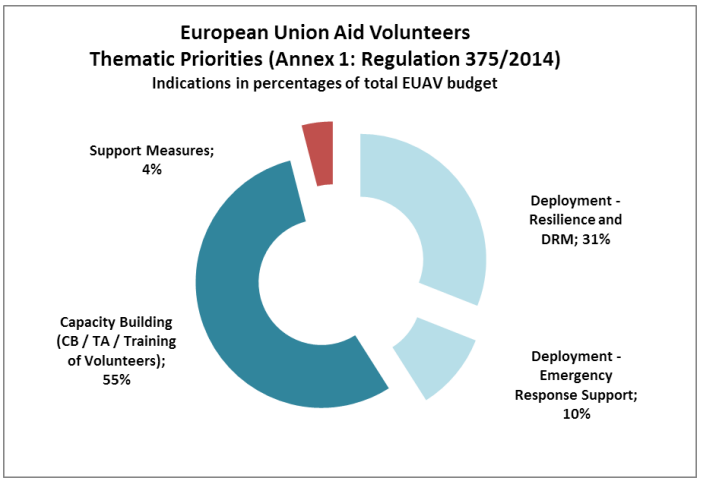
The DG ECHO operational units [30] and the field presence of DG ECHO (i.e. country offices / regional support offices) are not strictly process stakeholders as these are not involved in EUAV implementation[31] (e.g. no involvement processes / monitoring responsibilities defined). The field missions revealed that there is very limited coordination of and information about EUAV actions in the countries covered by EUAV-funded projects.

3.3 Facts and figures of the Initiative

3.3.1 Thematic priorities

The Regulation No. 375/2014 defines high level thematic priorities in its Annex 1. This definition goes along with the proportional allocation of the financial envelope which was set aside to implement the Regulation. The requirement of Annex 1, as can be seen in the diagram below, defines the importance of the thematic priorities and thus the direction of the investment of the funds allocated to the EUAV. It is important to note that the majority of funds (about 55%) are dedicated to capacity building (third country organisations) and technical assistance (EU organisations).

Figure 2: EUAV Thematic Priorities and Budget Share



[29] i.e. EUAV Implementation Workflow (version of April 2017)
[30] The EUAV Initiative is placed under Directorate A (Unit A/3)
[31] The DG ECHO EUAV team however informs the field offices about the EUAV projects and deployments in the respective country or region. Furthermore, the DG ECHO units D1 (Legal affairs), D2 (Communication), D3 (Budget and finance) and A2 (Emergency preparedness and security) are regularly consulted..

Next to the percentages, the Regulation defines some flexibility regarding the allocation of funds by thematic priority (defined as deviation percentages).

3.3.2 Projects funded under EUAV

The following table provides an overview of projects selected for co-funding. Altogether 21 projects were selected in the period 2015 and 2016 and have been co-funded with a total of 13.79 m EURO (this does not include the self-contribution of applicants of at least 15% of the total contract value).

Table 5: EUAV co-funded projects by type and year (calls for proposal 2015 – 2016)

Type	Application Year	Total co-funding by year (in €)	Number of Projects
Capacity Building	2015	3,303,072	6
	2016	1,259,294	2
Capacity Building		**4,562,367**	**8**
Deployment	2015	1,365,045	2
	2016	4,789,980	4
Deployment		**6,155,026**	**6**
Technical Assistance	2015	1,524,642	4
	2016	1,543,730	3
Technical Assistance		**3,068,373**	**7**
Grand total		**13,785,767**	**21**

Source: Data tables EACEA, June 2017 (figures do not include the organisations self-contribution)

The annual EUAV work programmes adopted by the Commission, set implementation targets and allocate funds to achieve these targets. The annual targets are based on the overall targets (deployments / support to organisations) which have been set at the start of the Initiative. The following table shows the allocated amounts for 2015 and 2016 and the actual commitments at the level of selected grant applications in the same period.

Table 6: EUAV Budget allocated against committed (2015 – 2016)

Thematic priority	Heading	2015			2016		
		Allocated €	Committed €	% comm.	Allocated €	Committed €	% comm.
1	Deployment	8,400,000	1,365,045	16%	8,400,000	4,789,981	57%
2/3	Technical assistance / Capacity building	6,948,000	4,827,716	69%	7,960,000	2,803,026	35%
		15,348,000	6,192,761	**40%**	16,360,000	7,593,006	**46%**

Source: Data tables EACEA, June 2017 (figures do not include the organisations' self-contributions)

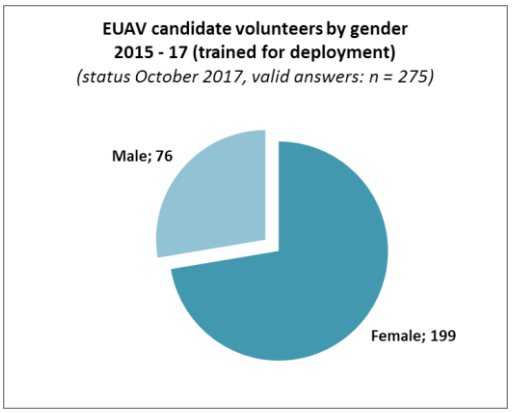
➔ In both 2015 and 2016, the committed amounts remained below 50% of the allocated budget for EUAV.

3.3.3 Candidate volunteers

The Executive Agency EACEA (EA) reports **275 selected candidate volunteers** during the period 2015 – 2017 (including those not yet deployed, having participated in the training course cycles in June and August 2017). Of the 275 candidate volunteers, 44 have been deployed in the period of the current evaluation´s field missions (July 2017)[32]. The group of volunteers selected show the following characteristics:

[32] In October 2017 EACEA reports on a total number of 111 deployed volunteers since the beginning of the EUAV Initiative

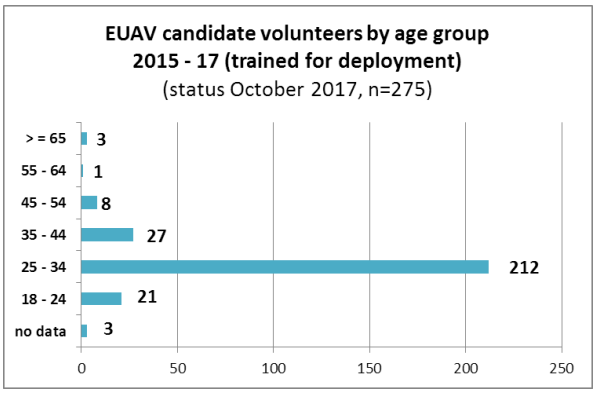
Figure 3: Candidate volunteers by gender (2015 – 17)



Source: Information EACEA

➔ A clear majority of the EUAV candidate volunteers (selected) are females (72%)

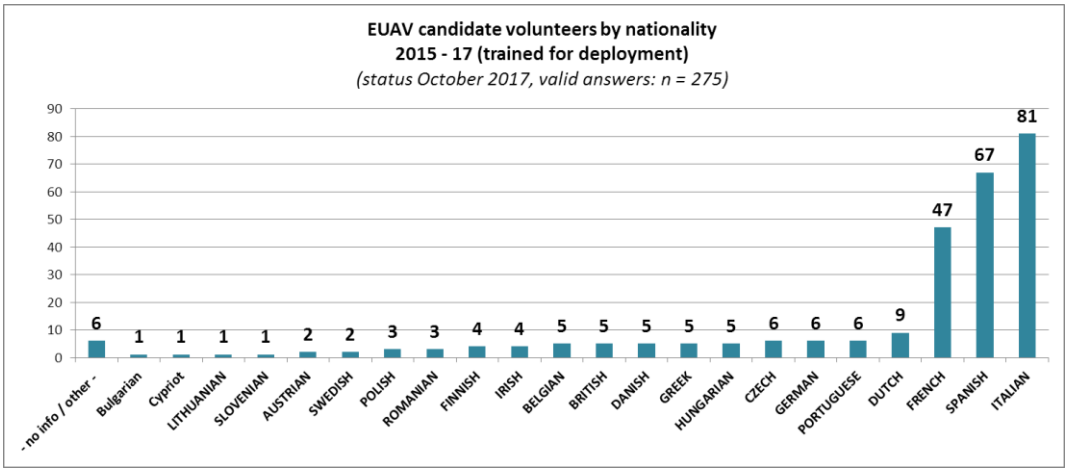
Figure 4: Candidate volunteers by age group (2015 – 17)



Source: Information EACEA

➔ The clear majority of the candidate volunteers (78%) belong to the age group 25 – 34 years. The number of volunteers outside this band is low (22 %).

Figure 5: Candidate volunteers by nationality (2015 – 17)



Source: Information EACEA

➔ The vast majority of the candidate volunteers are citizens of Italy, Spain or France (71 %) and a low percentage come from the EU13 countries (20 volunteers or < 7% of the candidate volunteers).

3.4 Output against planning

Based on the annual work programme, the Executive Agency prepares two different calls for proposals each year: one for the thematic priority deployment and another for the thematic priority capacity building and technical assistance (specifically for EU organisations).

The annual work plans indicate three types of core output targets:

- Number of volunteers (equivalent to the number of vacancies for volunteers)
- Number of beneficiary organisations supported by TA / CB measures
- Number of applications for certifications

Linked to these outputs, the budget is allocated in terms of ceilings for the two thematic priorities. As the EUAV Initiative is organised in the form of a grant scheme, the output targets can only be estimated, as **the final figures are directly dependent on the responses to the calls for proposal** (number of responses, content, and quality).

During the reference period of the interim evaluation, the demand for funding (deployment calls / TA – CB calls) was significantly lower than expected if comparing allocated and committed budget.

The number of organisations interested in engaging in the EUAV Initiative (i.e. becoming an active partner by applying for certification as a sending or hosting organisation) continuously increased over the years and by September 2017 had reached 141 organisations (target until 2020 is to certify 170 organisations). However, the number of certified sending organisations is far below what is needed to reach the deployment targets of the Initiative (33 SOs certified to date, which ultimately determine the number of vacancies for EUAV volunteers). Please see chapter 3.5 for further details on the development of certifications.

Indicative information from the 2017 responses to the calls for proposals, suggests that the funds allocated for TA/CB projects will possibly not be enough to cover all the applications which are eligible and have been successfully evaluated against the award criteria. Funds allocated to the deployment priority, however, will not be spent in full.

Table 7: Responses to EUAV calls for proposals 2017

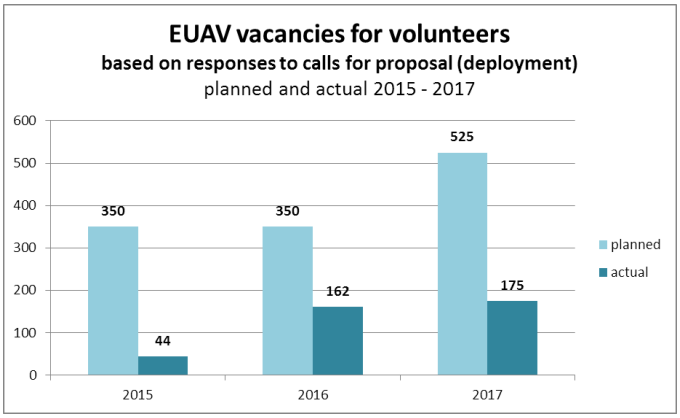
Responses to EUAV calls for proposals 2017	
Deployment:	**6 Applications** / worth about 5.7 m EURO (12.6 m EURO allocated) – confirmed by EACEA
TA / CP:	details on final results not yet available (however, the allocated budget for CB and TA for 2017 is expected to be completely committed)

Source: EACEA statistics on responses to calls (August 2017)

3.4.1 Vacancies for volunteers (2015 – 16)

In the reference period, based on the responses to calls for proposals in 2015 and 2016, 6 deployment projects were funded, creating about 206 vacancies for volunteers in third countries. The figures for 2017 show altogether six successful applications for the deployment call. The estimated number of vacancies created by these projects will reach around 175 positions for EUAV volunteers at a total budget of 5.7 m EURO.

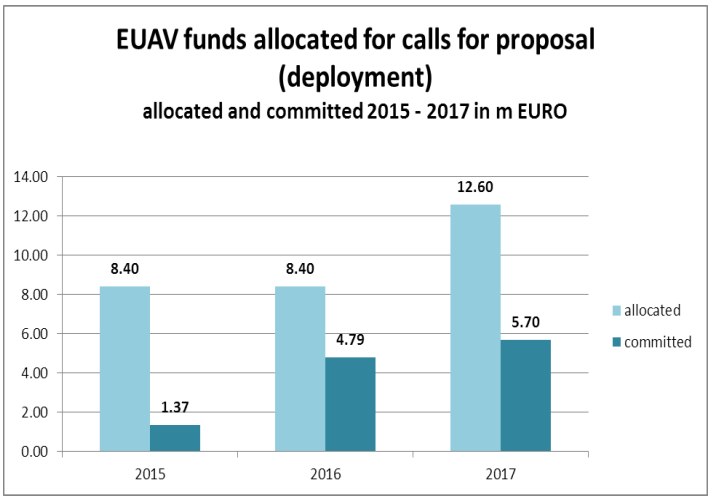
Figure 6: Vacancies for EUAV volunteers 2015 – 2017



Source: Information EACEA (September 2017)

The committed budget remains clearly below the planned / allocated budget as can be seen below:

Figure 7: EUAV funds for deployment (allocated and committed)



Source: Information EACEA (September 2017)

With respect to the deployment calls, the Initiative clearly underperformed[33] and did not reach the targets set out in the annual work programmes for 2015, 2016, and 2017. Aside from deployment, this is also true for the online volunteer opportunities, which are just about to start[34] (delays can be noted at concept development and administrative challenges[35]. Looking at the output so far, it is doubtful whether the overall targets[36], in terms of volunteer engagement / deployment, can be met.

3.4.2 Capacity building projects (2015 – 16)

Altogether 8 capacity building projects have been selected for co-funding, 6 in 2015 and 2 in 2016. The projects involved around 36 EU partners[37] and provided capacity building measures to 52 third country organisations (partners in these projects).

[33] It has to be noted that the Initiative is organized in the form of a grant scheme and performance is based on the demand at the level of EU and third country actors interested and willing to engage (i.e. to get certified and also to successfully participate in calls for proposals).

[34] DG ECHO reported one first assignment for online volunteers put in place end of September 2017 (more are foreseen within the preselected projects)

[35] The Sending organisation would only offer online positions if they could claim the costs for the management of online volunteering related tasks. The eligibility of such costs was only included in the second round of calls 2016 at the request of the EUAV partners.

[36] Targets of the thematic priority 1 "Deployment of EU volunteers" (2014 – 2020): 4,000 volunteers deployed, 10,000 online volunteers, and 2,000 apprenticeships

[37] The effective number of EU partners is lower due to the fact that some EU organisations are involved in more than one project.

Table 8: Overview of co-funded capacity building projects (2015 – 16)

Year	Project Code	Applicant	Number of EU partner	Number of third country recipient organisations (beneficiary organisation)	Total partners	Value of contract	*Average cost (Euro per beneficiary)*
2015	CB15-565833-FV.	France Volontaires	4	*5*	9	825,297	
2015	CB15-565837-DDPCV	DDPCV- CP , Italy	7	*4*	11	544,922	
2015	CB15-565839-GVC	GVC	4	*8*	12	476,182	
2015	CB15-569871-CA	Caritas Austria	3	*7*	10	856,824	
2015	CB15-569892-ICCO	Dutch Interchurch / ICCO	8	*5*	13	804,886	
2015	CB15-570011-ADICE	ADICE	3	*11*	14	459,988	
		Total 2015	**29**	***40***	**69**	**3,968,099**	*99,202*
2016	CB16-581812-ADICE	ADICE	3	*9*	12	682,499	
2016	CB16-581813-EG	La Guilde	4	*3*	7	821,879	
		Total 2016	**7**	***12***	**19**	**1,504,378**	*125,365*
		Grand total (2015-16)	**36**	***52***	**88**	**5,472,477**	*105,240*

Source: EUAV e-forms, contract values including self-contribution of applicant

The following table shows the status of certifications which relate to the capacity building activities of EUAV. Altogether 16 certifications can be associated with CB projects.

Table 9: Certifications of hosting organisations related to CB activities (2015 – 2016)

	2015	2016 (only new)	Total
Third country organisations involved in capacity building	*40*	*12*	*52*
Already certified	2	none	2
Certification during or after Capacity Building	**16**	**none**	**16**

Source: Compilation based on projects' e-forms

3.4.3 Technical assistance projects (2015 – 16)

Altogether 7 technical assistance projects were selected for co-funding during the period 2015 – 2016. These projects are still ongoing and involve approx. 40 European partners from different EU countries as can be seen in the table below. Most of the projects aim to prepare the project partners to successfully undergo EUAV sending organisation certification. However, the project applications do not explicitly formulate successful certification as an output / outcome.

Table 10: Overview of co-funded technical assistance projects (2015 – 16)

Year	Project Code	Applicant	Number of Partners (including applicant and associates)	Countries	Remark	Value of contracts in EURO
2015	TA15-565807-EG	La Guilde (FR)	10	France, UK, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Hungary, Slovenia, Cyprus, and Latvia	Strengthening of volunteers management practice and gaining the capacity to undergo EUAV SO certification	891,360
2015	TA15-565835-FADIS	Alianza (SP)	4	Spain, Italy, Hungary, and UK	Volonteurope members (51 organisations), 16 of which will be prepared to act as EUAV SO	404,524
2015	TA15-566142-CW	Concern Worldwide (IR)	3	Ireland, France, and Czech Republic	3 members of Alliance2015	468,210
2015	TA15-570292-PAH	Polish Humanitarian Action (PL)	5	Poland, Czech Repulblic, Estonia, Slovakia	Each of the partners intend to become an EUAV SO and field branches to become EUAV HOs	231,635
		Sub-total 2015	**22**			**1,995,729**
2016	TA16-581814-EG	La Guilde (FR)	6	France, Ireland, Portugal, Malta, Greece	All partners to "have the capacity to undergo EUAV certification" at end of project	659,328
2016	TA16-581815-MME	Medicos Del Mundo (SP)	6	Spain, Greece, Belgium, Netherland, UK, and Sweden	All partners will be able to be certified as EUAV SO (all MDM network members)	594,096
2016	TA16-581817-GVC	GVC (IT)	10	Italy, Spain, Estonia, Portugal, Latvia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Slovenia, and Hungary	10 partners of which 3 are plaforms which represent about 80 member organisations	590,069
		Sub-total 2016	**22**			**1,843,493**
		Grand total 2015 - 16	**44**			**3,839,222**

Source: EUAV e-forms, contract values including self-contribution of applicant

The following table shows the status of certifications which relate to the technical assistance activities of EUAV. Two-thirds of certified SOs have been part of TA projects.

Table 11: Certifications of sending organisations related to TA activities (2015 – 2016)

	2015	2016 (only new)	Total
EU Organisations involved in technical assistance	*22*	*22*	*44*
Already certified	*6*	*3*	*9*
Certification during or after Technical Assistance	**5**	**none**	**5**

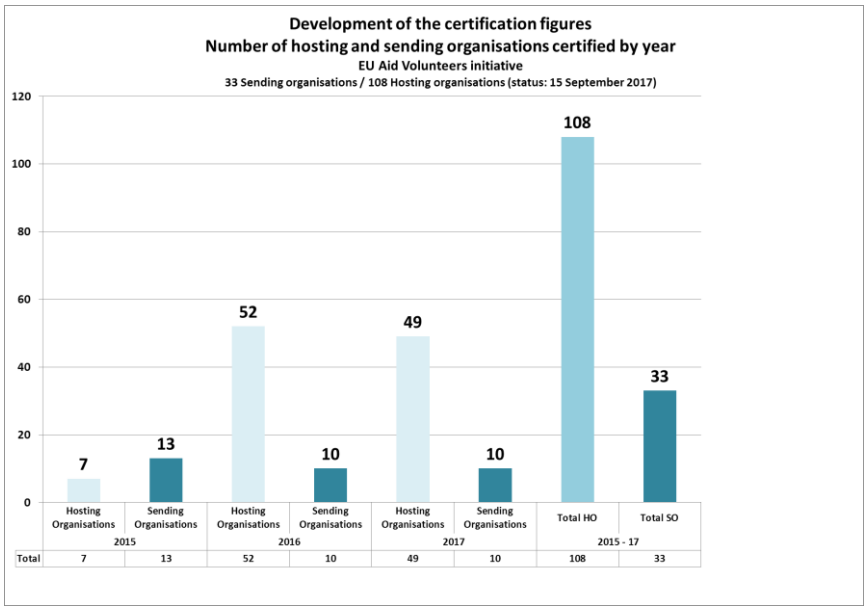
Source: Compilation based on project´s e-forms

Figures on newly certified organisations, having participated in the EUAV deployment call for proposals in 2017, are not yet available.

3.5 Development of certification figures

The evolution of the certification figures is shown in the graph below. It shows that the annual certification figures remain at roughly the same level for the sending organisations (despite intensified promotion at stakeholder level such as the "European roadshow"). The results for the hosting organisations show a sharp increase in 2016 (from 7 to 52 HOs), which is likely to be surpassed in 2017. Figure 8 below shows the status of certifications in September 2017. The total number of certified organisations reaches 141 in total (33 sending organisations and 108 hosting organisations).

Figure 8: Evolution of the certification figures 2015 - 2017



Source: EUAV selection results presentation, September 2017

➔ The overall interest in certification, specifically at the level of potential third country partners, is well underway to reach the indicated target figure of 170[38] in 2020 (the monitoring framework establishes this target for hosting and sending organisations, to be reached by 2020).

It is the opinion of the evaluation team that the success found in the growing number of certified HOs should not distract from the low figure of SOs (33), especially considering the potential that

[38] It has to be noted that the number of certified sending organisations which successfully participate in deployment calls, determines the number of vacancies for EUAV volunteers. The results of the 2017 deployment calls (< 50% of the available budget committed) clearly indicate that the current number of 33 sending organisations is not sufficient to generate the targeted numbers of vacancies (i.e. 525 for 2017).

can be found among the existing 206 FPA partners of DG ECHO. Participation in such EU-based SOs is crucial for further leverage effects, as many of the FPA partners of DG ECHO, themselves have wide networks of local offices or local implementing partners, and operate with their own humanitarian volunteering schemes. The large majority of the certified HOs are already local offices of EU SOs (> 72 %, or 78 out of 108), and these numbers can potentially be multiplied. The group of certified EU sending organisations is composed of DG ECHO FPA partners (15 of 33 or roughly 50 %), traditional volunteer sending organisations and other NGOs that are not FPA members. It can be noted that 7 of the 33 EU sending organisations, or 21%, are registered in an EU13 Member State.

3.6 Achievements in line with the outcomes defined in the Intervention Logic

A summary of the achievements of the EUAV Initiative in the period of evaluation is provided below, structured according to the **list of expected outcomes** as defined in the Intervention Logic of the EUAV Initiative (see Figure 1). It is clearly too early at the present stage of development of the Initiative to provide a substantiated assessment of the impact.

Outcome 1: **Enhanced coherence and consistency in standards and procedures of volunteer management across Europe (Art 7.1.e)**[39]

DG ECHO established a comprehensive set of (European) standards for volunteer management in humanitarian assistance contexts, which is mandatory for all applicants for EUAV deployment grants.

The set-up of a functional and effective implementation framework for the EUAV Initiative (at European level) was successful and in line with the requirements set out in the EUAV Regulations.

Outcome 2: **Improved skills, knowledge competencies and employability of EUAV volunteers (Art 7.1 b)**

Generally, the training provided for candidate volunteers received highly positive ratings in surveys and interviews, and in particular, built the foundation for a common identity amongst the EUAV volunteers.

Confirmed by almost all implementing stakeholders in interviews and surveys (including SOs/ HOs), the Initiative succeeded in improving the skills and competencies of the candidate volunteers, and even more in the case of deployed volunteers (confirmed in interviews with volunteers).

Volunteers confirmed the positive impact on their career development; there is not yet evidence that the EUAV volunteer assignments furthered career development but examples from EUAV pilot projects show that in several cases volunteers were subsequently hired for paid positions by their sending organisations as well as others who confirmed the improved employability of former EUAV volunteers.

Outcome 3: **Improved support to humanitarian action in third countries through additional human resources and knowledge sharing (Art 7.1 a)**

No clear evidence can be found yet for how far humanitarian actions are supported by the human resource "EUAV volunteer" and the knowledge sharing component of the EUAV Initiative. At present, the deployments mostly focus on administrative support services and capacity building in DRR, while capacity building is centred around volunteer management improvements. Ex-post

[39] Reference to the respective articles of the EUAV Regulation.

evaluations of the EUAV funded actions will show to what extent this particular outcome has been achieved.

Outcome 4: **Improved capacity of sending organisations to deliver humanitarian aid (Art 7.1 a)**

The vast majority of recipients of TA, expressed their satisfaction with the support measures and confirmed tangible improvements of their capacities. At the present stage of EUAV development, the TA actions concentrate on improving volunteer management processes and on the provision of assistance to enable EU organisations to apply for certification – and to a smaller extent on improving response capacities directly. It is too early in the process to draw any conclusions on the impact on the capacity of SOs to deliver aid, as no approved final reports are available yet.

Outcome 5: **Capacity and resilience of local communities is strengthened and volunteering fostered (Art 7.1 c)**

Hosting organisations unanimously confirmed that through EUAV support measures, particularly the Capacity Building component, their response capacity was tangibly strengthened. 83 % of the survey respondents confirmed that their capacity to prepare for disasters and to respond to disasters had been improved through EUAV support measures. The evaluators expect the actual impact on preparedness and response capacity to improve in the future if there is a swift transition from CB focusing on volunteer management, to more response and preparedness-oriented CB.

Outcome 6: **Sending organisations benefit from increased exchange of knowledge for enhanced humanitarian action (Art 7.1.a)**

EU partners of EUAV confirm the positive impact of knowledge exchange from its TA component. All respondents to the survey were satisfied or very satisfied with the TA component. More than 90% agreed that they had been involved in the needs assessment, that their needs had been addressed, and that the capacity of managing volunteers had been improved.

However, the vast majority of the partnerships existed before EUAV funding: clearly the first preference of the EU partners is to give priority to trusted partners rather than starting new partnerships at the beginning of a new (and unknown) Initiative. This situation might change in the future. An analysis of the responses to the 2017 calls will provide more clarity in this respect.

For the sending organisations set up more recently or who did not find the opportunity to collaborate with DG ECHO in the framework of the long-established FPA, the EUAV Initiative can be a valuable entry-point to start working in the humanitarian space and to enhance their capacities through knowledge exchange.

Outcome 7: **Strengthened peer-support and the reinforcement of the distinct identity of EU Aid Volunteers**

The Platform is not yet fully functional so peer support is not available. Deployed volunteers are ambivalent about their identity as EU Aid Volunteers. Amongst themselves they identify as EU Aid Volunteers, and sharing in the training helps to build that identity, but in their work in country they are more connected to their HOs and SOs than to EUAV, and so far DG ECHO Field Offices have not been encouraged by DG ECHO headquarters to support an EUAV identity.

Outcome 8: **Higher public awareness of the brand identity of the EUAV Initiative and the values of the EU's humanitarian action (Art 7 1.d)**

Although DG ECHO does not yet have the instruments in place to measure impact on public awareness, the EU partners of EUAV are convinced that there is a substantial impact. 100 % of the EU partners agree with the statement: "Particularly though its European dimension (transnational partnerships, technical assistance for EU actors, etc.) EUAV helps to create visibility for EU humanitarian actions and EU values inside and outside the EU." Continuous media monitoring and Eurobarometer polling with the right questions will be adequate measures to prove this finding at later stage.

4 Evaluation criteria and questions

This chapter provides the evidenced responses to the evaluation questions (EQs) outlined by DG ECHO for the present EUAV Interim Evaluation. The evaluation findings are structured in line with the overall evaluation criteria applicable to this evaluation (Relevance, Coherence, EU Added-Value, Effectiveness, and Efficiency). In responding to the questions, the evaluation team followed the requirements of the evaluation matrix and the related indicators established as far as this was sensible and feasible.

4.1 Relevance

When analysing the relevance of the EUAV Initiative, the evaluation team concentrated on assessing relevance against the established objectives of EUAV which were outlined during the setting-up of the initiative - based on identified needs. The ToR for this section of the evaluation ask for the following issues to be considered:

- Evaluation Question 1- the fit between EUAV's objectives and its identified stakeholders;
- Evaluation Question 2 - the fit between the objectives and the funded actions identified in the Regulation;
- Evaluation Question 3 - the fit between the volunteers' skills and HOs' needs.

This section addresses these three issues and offers conclusions on the overall relevance of the Objectives and the Initiative. The box below lays out the Objectives, the identified stakeholders and the funded actions which need to be considered.

Table 12: Overview on EUAV objectives, stakeholders and types of actions

Objectives (5)	Stakeholders (4)	Types of action (10)
1. Contribute to increasing and improving the capacity of the Union to provide humanitarian aid	Volunteers	Standards regarding candidate and EU Aid Volunteers
2. Improve the skills, knowledge and competences of volunteers in the field of humanitarian aid and the terms and conditions of their engagement'	Sending organisations (or European organisations if they are not deploying volunteers)	Deployment of EU Aid Volunteers in third countries
3. Build the capacity of hosting organisations and foster volunteering in third countries	Host organisations	Capacity building of hosting organisations
4. Communicate the Union's humanitarian aid principles agreed in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid	End-beneficiaries ('targeted local communities')	Identification and selection of candidate volunteers
5. Enhance coherence and consistency of volunteering across Member States in order to improve opportunities for Union citizens to participate in humanitarian aid and activities		Training programme and support for training and apprenticeship placements
		Database of EU Aid Volunteers
		Certification
		Technical assistance
		EU Aid Volunteers' Network
		Communication and awareness raising

4.1.1 Fit between the needs of stakeholders and the objectives of the Initiative

EQ 1: Fit between the objectives of the Initiative and the needs of end-beneficiaries (targeted, local communities), DG ECHO's partners (sending and hosting organisations), and volunteers.

Introduction

The evidence that the evaluation offers to support the answer to this question comes from field missions, interviews and surveys (volunteers, HOs, SOs, non-participating organisations and Member States) as well as EUAV documents.

Findings

Objective 1: The number of organisations participating in the EUAV Initiative is growing (see Figure 8) and they participate in order to benefit from capacity building, technical assistance and deployment, actions which increase and improve the Union's capacity. This is expressed clearly by Europe-based organisations and by the fact that, of 108 third-country partners in deployment and CB projects, the evaluators calculate that 78 are field offices of INGOs and are therefore, even if not legally so, part of the Union's capacity.

European organisations are looking for talent, and interviewees reported that they see the EUAV Initiative as a highly relevant way to fill existing capacity gaps, as well as to attract future employees to the organisation. The partnerships for technical assistance, mostly using existing networks, have shared learning and expanded knowledge among European organisations. In the surveys, European organisations were positive (2 or fewer dissenting voices out of 17) when asked about 'relevance to EU citizens wishing to engage in humanitarian work', 'the initiative is relevant to us as an EU organisation' and 'EUAV addresses a clear gap in the EU's provision of humanitarian aid'. They were less positive (5 with no view) about the relevance to end-beneficiaries. Two important criticisms of the EUAV Initiative concerned its country focus (the intentional avoidance of countries where the greatest humanitarian need is usually seen to be (e.g. Syria) and where the organisations' humanitarian departments focus most attention) and the use of European volunteers in a sector anxious to develop local capacity.

The capacity acquired by European organisations has not always been directly related to that required for any future volunteer deployments through the EUAV Initiative e.g. trainings in French for existing staff. Where this has happened in an FPA agency, DG ECHO will see longer-term benefit through any funding the SO receives; where the SO is not an FPA agency the objective remains relevant, since capacity will be built, but the benefits for the Initiative will be less, especially if the SO fails to receive funding for deployment.

Candidate volunteers are not applying for EUAV vacancies 'to increase and improve the capacity of the Union': the motivations of interviewed volunteers mostly included 'paid jobs are hard to find'. But by applying, they help DG ECHO achieve the objective – and they are positive about it, with 72% believing the EUAV Initiative is relevant to 'addressing the real needs of people in my host community'. Nine out of eleven volunteers interviewed during one field mission confirmed they would stay in the sector, 58% of volunteer survey respondents said they would seek further volunteering opportunities in the humanitarian sector (and many of the comments implied that others would be seeking paid work in the sector), and 15% said they would not.

Feedback from all stakeholders was that work with and for beneficiaries is the main reason they are engaging in EUAV (e.g. volunteers: 100% applied to EUAV to 'help people in need'). Objective 1 does not focus on this and is therefore less relevant than it could be. In practice, this may be semantic as Objective 1 proposes capacity building to support the EU's provision of aid (a process)

while the Calls for Proposal make clear that the purpose of capacity building meets the humanitarian needs of others (an intended result)[40] .

Objective 2:[41] In the survey, the top-scoring reasons why volunteers applied to EUAV were to 'help people in need' (100%)[42], 'gather work experience' (97%) and 'further career in humanitarian field' (98%). They responded very positively, when asked in the survey, about the relevance of EUAV to areas such as their career ambitions (79%) and their personal development (92%). Out of 6 options, European organisations felt that EUAV was most relevant to EU citizens looking to engage in humanitarian work. Non-participating organisations were, for the most part, not working in areas such as skills improvement and the deployment of volunteers.

Objective 2's focus is on improving volunteers' skills. The EUAV training aims to improve skills, though has a greater focus on knowledge and competences. The main improvement of skills comes from what volunteers learn from the deployment and can take to their next role, so is of less relevance to HOs and their end-beneficiaries. European organisations' high rating of this objective must come from their expectation that they will benefit from the volunteers' improved experience in the future.

In relation to terms and conditions, the important factors in their deployment, for volunteers interviewed, were the task and the duration, not the allowances, insurance or leave. The terms and conditions (both the concept of them and the fact that DG ECHO is paying for them) are relevant to the other groups in that if they were worse or non-existent the volunteers would not apply, or the quality would be lower, and the SOs and HOs might not participate in the EUAV Initiative. As it is, the SOs and HOs have an excellent package to offer a volunteer alongside the certainty of funding.

Objective 3: In the surveys, Host Organisations were very positive about their capacity being built. 100% of HO respondents felt the capacity building they received addressed an actual need, and all but one was positive about the relevance of EUAV deployment both to the needs of their organisation and of their community. Seven were satisfied, and three dissatisfied with the degree to which volunteers addressed a need. 93% noted that they would continue to host EUAV volunteers, which is a strong endorsement. During the field missions the majority of deployments to INGO field offices were for strengthening internal capacity (admin, accounting, M&E) which would only be of indirect benefit to end-beneficiaries.

No European agency was dissatisfied with the relevance of the EUAV Initiative to the needs of HOs or end-beneficiaries. Most volunteers interviewed were engaged on strengthening their HO's capacity, and were satisfied with this, with a reservation about sustainability: when they left either another volunteer would be needed or an HO staff member would have to take on the work.

In relation to fostering local volunteering, 47% of European organisations responded that they work with local volunteers. 70% of HOs responded that they do work with local volunteers, and for 90% of them, strengthening local volunteering is an objective of their work with EUAV. All respondents were satisfied with the level of contribution of EUAV to their local volunteering, with a number of CB projects specifically targeting this. As one European agency notes: *"We have chosen to focus on strengthening local volunteering in risks reduction and preparedness, as recommended by Sendai framework. Local volunteers should be promoted not as beneficiaries but as partners of humanitarian aid, as reminded by UN General Secretary during World Humanitarian Summit – and EUAV initiative should keep this as a final aim."*

Objective 4: Overall this objective was not held to be significantly relevant by any of the groups. EUAV is an explicit contributor to the aid continuum of the Consensus and this has helped non-

[40] …contribute to strengthening the Union's capacity to provide needs-based humanitarian aid aimed at strengthening the capacity and resilience of vulnerable and disaster-affected communities in third countries by focusing on disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and enhancing the link between relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD), (2017)

[41] Information presented in EQ3 is also relevant to this section.

[42] **Presentation of figures from surveys in the text**: percentages provided are always combining positive statements (e.g. very relevant and relevant) and critical statements (e.g. dissatisfied and very dissatisfied) – no opinion / cannot judge answers are not included.

humanitarians engaged in EUAV to understand the full scope of LRRD and how their needs can be fulfilled within EUAV. Volunteer-sending organisations which have engaged with EUAV report that they relish the opportunity to learn more about the humanitarian sector.

SOs, HOs and volunteers are all aware of the requirement to communicate about EUAV, but this is at the project and individual level and is not about the humanitarian principles. The training teaches volunteers about the humanitarian principles, and some outputs from the TA projects have focussed on training INGO staff about them.

Objective 5: Not one interviewee or respondent to a survey mentioned this Objective as of relevance to them. Only one FPA survey respondent says that addressing coherence between MSs on volunteering is part of their activities. Nevertheless the TA projects have all, to one extent or another, contributed to this objective though at an organisational, rather than state or inter-state, level. While in the survey there was 90% satisfaction with the extent to which European organisations' technical needs were met by the projects, it seems that assuming TA will deliver this objective has not been a success: volunteer applications from the EU13, for example, are low despite the three years of EUAV promotion of standards (one SO's statistics show 58 applications from EU13 out of 517, with 23 of those from Romania alone). Additionally, the European organisations interviewed, appreciated the potential of EUAV's partnership requirements for spreading knowledge of volunteering throughout Europe but admitted they tended to partner with organisations they already know and trust.

Sample general comments received:

One European organisation noted in their survey response: "*It is a really good initiative that gives to the involved organizations (EU and Third countries organisation) the possibility to improve deeply and on long term their skills, materials and tools in humanitarian volunteering management with concrete activities and impacts on the structures.*"

One Member State wrote: *'EUAV operational objectives are of the utmost relevance since they allow European citizens the opportunity to actively participate and be engaged in capacity building of local communities or local organisations in disaster affected countries.'*

EQ1: Overall conclusions on the fit between objectives and stakeholders:

Overall, the objectives of EUAV are relevant to the needs of stakeholders in the EU, with some objectives more relevant to certain stakeholders than to others. The Impact Assessment and the Objectives were written in 2012 and, alongside IFRC and UNV, the EUAV Initiative is now one of the large-scale, multi-country volunteering schemes dedicated to humanitarian aid. Humanitarian work has still not joined the volunteering mainstream: although EUAV has been written up in FORUM reports (FORUM is the largest global network of volunteer-sending organisations), it is noticeable that the agenda at its forthcoming conference in Korea has nothing on humanitarian work. This makes EUAV's existence and communications, of continued relevance overall in connecting the volunteering in development and humanitarian sectors. Conclusions by Objective are provided hereunder.

- Objective One is seen by relevant stakeholders as an ongoing need. Organisations, through the training and deployment of volunteers as well as the organisational capacity-strengthening activities, need and benefit from Objective One. The fact that EUAV has been relevant to both traditional humanitarian organisations and volunteer-sending organisations is a noteworthy achievement. One way of mainstreaming the emphasis on humanitarian outcomes and impact, which so many stakeholders mentioned as important, would be through this Objective.
- Objective Two (in terms of the skills available from volunteers) is seen by all stakeholders as a requirement for EUAV to be successful, and therefore as an ongoing need. As an objective it will be increasingly relevant to attracting volunteers. As EUAV's reputation grows, from volunteer stories, and as opportunities for Europeans to gain well-prepared

operational experience continue to diminish, so more volunteers may choose EUAV as a way of enhancing their skills and experience.

- The first part of Objective Three is seen by all stakeholders as an ongoing need. End-beneficiaries will be more concerned with the impact of any TA and deployment activities (e.g. the application of organisational learning such as a more efficient monitoring process), most of which, presently, are building HO capacity. The second part is an ongoing need for organisations. It is relevant particularly in the light of the Grand Bargain and the increased focus of the humanitarian sector on local partnership and capacity.
- Objective Four was never mentioned to evaluators as being relevant to volunteers or organisations and their activities; the humanitarian principles need to underpin EUAV activities rather than be the subject of each stakeholders' communications on EUAV. Stakeholders assume this objective is most relevant to DG ECHO, and it is EACEA, the e-forms and the grant application assessors who have the key role in ensuring that the principles are upheld and adhered to by proposed EUAV projects - and therefore that evaluation and reports can communicate that EUAV projects are relevant to the principles. The focus of this objective on purely humanitarian principles makes this less relevant to most stakeholders.
- Objective Five remains a need for Member States, and for the organisations and potential volunteers based in them. None of the suggested activities in the calls for proposal[43] take this objective forward at a wider level than single organisations or partnerships, which is reducing its relevance to pan-European coherence or consistency. Promotion of the standards would be one means of making this objective more relevant to more organisations.

Recommendation

- (R1.1) To enhance their relevance the evaluation recommends considering some changes to the wording of the Objectives which are suggested for when DG ECHO looks again at the Regulations. Details are provided in Annex 5 - Reflections on wording of the Regulation.

Issues to be considered

- With current projects focusing on learning and capacity-building, DG ECHO could allocate some existing TA funds specifically to initiatives which further objective 5. This could involve country-wide initiatives on volunteer standards, or the promotion of volunteering and related activities.
- It is suggested that DG ECHO could include, in any call for proposal which would support Objective 3, some relevant terminology from their commitment to the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS). This would explicitly show that EUAV is contributing to the Grand Bargain.

[43] "— (Internal) organisational development, i.e. capacity building and technical assistance for the proper internal running of the organisation.
— (External) organisational development, i.e. capacity building with regard to how the organisation interacts and engages with other stakeholders.
— other types of capacity building, of a specific technical or thematic nature notably with regards to the technical requirements set by the standards and procedures of Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 375/2014 with a view to certifying prospective sending and hosting organisations; and technical capacities in sectors linked to humanitarian aid."

4.1.2 Fit between objectives and types of action under EUAV

EQ 2 Fit between the objectives and the types of action (as listed in the TOR under section 2.3) funded under the Initiative. Does the implementation during the evaluation period leave any particular gaps to be addressed in the coming period?

The actions funded under the EUAV Initiative are defined in Regulation No. 375 articles 9-17. Most articles offer at least one stated purpose for the action. Deployment is the original intention of EUAV, the reason for 'Volunteer' being in the name: Regulation No. 375, Article 1 is establishing a framework for *"contributions from European volunteers to support and complement humanitarian aid in third countries".*

It is not to be expected that all actions are relevant to all objectives: for example, the existence of a volunteer database will not support communication about humanitarian aid principles. For some activities the link to an objective is not direct, or is incidental. As an example, the selection of volunteers might be incidentally relevant to objective 5 (coherence in Member States), because less-experienced organisations may learn from the lead organisation's handling of the volunteer selection process; or the technical assistance may be indirectly relevant to volunteers' skills development if it incorporates the development of a learning programme which volunteers might study.

The findings come from interviews in Europe, EUAV documents, field missions and survey responses from volunteers and organisations. Further details on the findings can be found in Annex 6 - Additional analysis of different actions on relevance related to EQ2.

Findings, per type of action:

Standards: Regulation No. 1244 Article 1 details the areas where organisations must follow procedures and standards, including, inter alia, the recruitment, management and deployment of volunteers, insurance, duty of care and performance monitoring. Further procedures or standards cover the competence framework, skills recognition, legal compliance by SOs and HOs and partnerships.[44]

In the survey 40% of European organisations participating in EUAV were dissatisfied with the standards and procedures in place. Some standards, organisations report, duplicate existing systems (e.g. learning and development), some are unachievable (linking with HOs on selection has not been possible due to time or connectivity), some just do not happen (a manager of acceptable quality for the volunteer due to the lack of staff at the HO; learning and development in a number of cases). The standards are mostly process-related, and most large INGOs dictate the outcomes and outputs they want to see when they work with management policy, letting their country offices decide on the process.

Volunteers interviewed saw the standards as one of the attractions of EUAV: they made EUAV seem more professional than most other schemes: this makes the standards relevant to Objective 2. Eight HO survey respondents judged the standards and procedures adequate, one was dissatisfied and, as part of the organisational strengthening delivered to partnerships by TA and CB projects, they are highly relevant to Objectives 3 and 5.

In relation to Objective 5, the notes from the EUAV Network meeting of February 2017 (page 8) state: "*It is also key to set up common standards that newcomers will be able to follow*" and that has been the objective of a number of Capacity-Building Projects.

[44] Further details on this and other types of action can be found in Annex 7 - Detailed analysis of sub-questions related to EQ3.

Issue to be considered on standards

- Not all EUAV partners followed the standards e.g. with respect to Learning and Development requirements. In this context, it is recommended that more training is needed on using the platform and EACEA need to stress the importance of the process for the volunteers.

Capacity building: Weaknesses in capacity of third-country organisations have long been a problem for the sector, and a good reason for developed country NGOs to continue operating at local level. The Grand Bargain attempts to redress this imbalance, and this element of EUAV is a highly relevant contribution to the sector's identified needs, and therefore to Objectives 1 and 3. In the surveys, 100% of HOs felt that CB was addressing the needs of their organisation and there was no dissatisfaction expressed by European organisations in their survey responses on Capacity Building. Furthermore, many of the capacity building projects have been aimed at improving volunteer management standards and for that reason the action is highly relevant to Objective 2. HO satisfaction with the CB projects' contribution to local volunteering was also high (9 out of 13 satisfied). There is no evaluative data yet available from EUAV deployments to show that end-beneficiaries have found the strengthened capacity of HOs to be relevant to them.

Training: The contracted training provider organises online modules and a 9-day face-to-face training for every candidate volunteer. The trainings must cover areas identified as essential background knowledge and preparation for the volunteers' deployments[45], as well as contribute to an assessment of the volunteers' competencies.

Without being trained, no individual can be an EU Aid Volunteer. The training is accepted as necessary and valuable by all stakeholders, and is strongly relevant to Objective 2. While volunteers interviewed did not apply for a deployment because of the training, it is clear from their reports that the training now has a good reputation and will encourage applications. The training is indirectly relevant to Objectives 1, 3 and 5 because of the ways in which a volunteer may support an HO or may stay in the sector.

The feedback on the training, from volunteers, is mostly positive (both in interviews and from an 90% positive survey response on its quality and adequacy), and has helped them prepare for their deployment and for any future work in the sector. However 26 volunteers (43%) felt the training was poor or very poor in matching the requirements of their project, with 34 rating it excellent or good. Volunteers interviewed had appreciated and benefitted from the training they attended. They had more to say about the process (too much online work, the unacceptable competitive element in the pilot training) than on the content and the relevance. 85% of volunteers were positive about the level and quality of security training before deployment.

From the organisational perspective, 8 HOs were satisfied with the level of training and preparation received by the volunteers, 2 were not. 5 SOs were satisfied with the type of training delivered and 2 were not. One consistent finding from interviews included the suggestion that Senior volunteers need less training: SOs were finding them harder to recruit because of the requirements (especially the timing issue mentioned in the recruitment case study – for more details see Annex 8 - Case study on Apprenticeship, Recruitment and Deployment. A second consistent finding was that some of the modules seemed to focus more on the response end of the LRRD spectrum, while most volunteers are working closer to the other end: *'[We] learnt a lot about humanitarian world and work but our role is definitely in development'* noted one volunteer.

[45] A general introduction to the Unions´ external relations and crisis response system; Introduction to humanitarian action, the Union humanitarian aid policy and the EU Aid Volunteer initiative; Managing personal safety, security and health; Project management; Inter-cultural awareness (and transversal issues); and a scenario-based simulation exercise.

Issue to be considered on training

- It would be helpful to analyse the modules of the training course in the light of their relevance to the roles and situations of the current or returned volunteers, in case some need less focus on emergency response situations. Considering the differing situations and needs of Senior and Junior Volunteers, would also enhance the training. To benefit from understanding individuals' specific needs EACEA could talk to the Humanitarian Passport Initiative/Open Badges (PHAP or the HLA) with a view to understanding how EUAV training offered could take into account previous training undertaken by candidates. Changes to the training (e.g. fewer days for Senior Volunteers) may require a change in the Regulations.

Certification: Regulation No. 1244 Article 1g foresees a certification mechanism which ensures that SOs comply with the standards and procedures referred to in Article 9 of Regulation No. 375. There is a differentiated mechanism for HOs.[46] .No organisation can participate in deployment activities without being certified and this in itself makes certification highly relevant to Objectives 1,2,3 and 5.

In survey responses, most HOs are positive about certification (85%), with European organisations less positive (14% found the certification process "straightforward and no major challenge", with 33% agreeing that it was "very cumbersome, in need of simplification").

Only 15 of 33 certified European organisations are FPA/FAFA partners, leaving 214 existing partners of DG ECHO yet to submit to EUAV certification. Feedback from organisations was that they have similar standards and processes in place already. Many of the European CB projects have been conceived as leading partners to certification.

The majority of hosting organisations interviewed on field missions were unaware of either the fact and meaning of certification, or what the process had been. This was due to staff changes or the fact that a European Head Office had handled it for them. This doesn't necessarily mean the HO does not fulfil the standards but it lessens the relevance of the certification for HOs (Objective 3) and may mean some HOs or HO staff are unaware of their responsibilities as certified agencies.. It means also that the relevance is primarily for DG ECHO (assurance) and for the volunteers (conformity with good practice). No HOs in the survey noted that certification in itself built their capacity. Also certification for HOs currently ignores the organisation's links to the community, and therefore its likely humanitarian impact. All 17 questions in the HO self-assessment form (with the possible exception of Q4 re vulnerable adults) relate to the HO's relationship with the volunteer.

Issue to be considered on certification

- Where EACEA is aware from proposals that volunteers in accepted deployment projects are to be working for other organisations (e.g. a government department or another local organisation), which have not been certified, they should seek reassurance from the SO that the HO is not going to be deliberately or inadvertently passing on its responsibilities as a certified agency.
- To consider in due time a new comparative assessment between the EUAV and FPA certification procedures; if relevant and feasible, this assessment could be coordinated with the possible revision of the FPA certification (as e.g. the People In Aid Code referred to in the FPA certification has since been merged with other humanitarian standards), which may itself help bridge the current gap between the two mechanisms and perhaps develop a 'fast track' certification for FPA and FAFA partners of DG ECHO who are already registered.

[46] Further information on certification can be found in the case study (presented in Annex 10 - Certification case study).

Grants for technical assistance[47]: Such grants, as offered by EUAV to European organisations, are increasingly rare in the humanitarian sector[48] and are strongly relevant to Objective 1 Applications for TA in 2015 and 2016 exceeded those for deployment (11 compared to 6) showing European organisations' interest in TA. There was almost no dissatisfaction expressed by European organisations in their survey responses in relation to TA and the TA projects have been used to introduce organisations in newer and smaller Member States to EUAV and to the standards required of sending organisations, thus showing TA's relevance to Objectives 2 and 5. As noted above in relation to CB, the EUAV TA Calls for Proposal do not require an outcome between the proposed activities and EUAV (e.g. certification or deployment - only 11 of 35 participants in Technical Assistance programmes have been certified).

Deployment: Other actions funded by the EUAV Initiative (e.g. TA, CB, training, certification) exist to prepare organisations and volunteers for deployment. The importance of deployment is reflected in the allocations in the Annual Work Plans (€12.6m for deployment vs €7.6m for TA/CB in 2017). The Calls for Proposal make clear that the priorities for deployment are the Union's capacity and organisational capacity[49]. Only 1 out of 16 European organisations disagreed with the statement that EUAV is relevant for EU citizens to engage in humanitarian work, and in conversations with evaluators they talked more about deployment than other projects (TA/CB).

All but one (out of 16) HO was positive about the relevance of deployment to their organisation's needs, and 13 out of 15 HOs felt deployment was relevant to their communities' needs also. One alternative to deployment is online volunteering, which is already an accepted action as part of deployment contracts.

From the volunteers' perspective, 34 felt their work was relevant to the local community, while 5 disagreed. The majority of volunteers interviewed applied for EUAV because they felt that what they would gain from the deployment would increase their employability –and answers to survey questions about personal enrichment (34 agree, 3 disagree) and contributing to employability (24/4) confirm this. Operating in the field was also a key motivation.

Identification and selection of candidate volunteers. The procedures for this action are detailed in Regulation No. 1244, Article 3 and Annex 1, requiring collaboration between SO and HO in developing task assignments, advertising vacancies and undertaking the selection. Without this action there would be no deployments and thus it is highly relevant to Objectives 1 and 3. As with the standards, volunteers found the robustness of this process an attraction of EUAV, and organisations succeeded in attracting top quality volunteers for their deployments. Further information can be found in the case study on recruitment. Also there are standards and procedures which EUAV requires of its SOs and HOs (Regulation No. 1244 Chapter 2) which have relevance to Objective 5.

Setting up and running a database of volunteers. A database of volunteers and returned volunteers is being built. It is too early to assess its relevance to, for example, easing timing problems encountered by SOs as they recruit volunteers (see case study. The idea of a database of candidate volunteers (a 'pool' or 'roster') was mentioned in the Impact Assessment (Option 2, module 4) and was reaffirmed as desirable by the February 2017 network meeting and in a number of interviews (see Annex 4 - Reflection on the establishment of a pool / roster of volunteers).

Setting up a network for all key-stakeholders. The network is defined in Regulation No. 1244 Article 16 as a platform. The intent of the networking is to facilitate knowledge-sharing and

[47] See definition in note above (Capacity building)

[48] DFID's move from unrestricted funding through PPAs to more explicitly thematic (and consortia) funding through UK Aid Connect is an example,

[49] The Call for Proposals 2017, for deployments, states: "These projects will contribute to strengthening the Union's capacity to provide needs-based humanitarian aid aimed at strengthening the capacity and resilience of vulnerable and disaster-affected communities in third countries by focusing on disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and enhancing the link between relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD). In addition, these projects may also strengthen the capacities of implementing sending and hosting organisations participating or intending to participate in the EU Aid Volunteers initiative, including in tools and methods of early warning for disasters."

partnership-building. The network platform is nascent and not many volunteers or organisations have used it, though DG ECHO have organised face-to-face events (e.g. the 2017 Network meeting) which interviewees mentioned as very useful for sharing knowledge and learning. Volunteers interviewed look forward to the platform (without knowing the benefits it will give them), though organisations interviewed will prioritise their own networks in the creation of partnerships.

Communication and awareness raising. EUAV is not widely known even within certified organisations, and is not understood by, for example, humanitarian teams even where volunteers are being deployed. 54% of FPA respondents do not keep up to date with EUAV activities – though are interested in receiving information. The Commission, European partners, HOs and volunteers are all required to communicate about EUAV. Yet it was apparent from field missions and interviews that individuals have widely differing views about what they are required to do (ranging from half a day a week on communications for one volunteer, to a short blog a quarter from another).

Communicating the aid principles from the Consensus is undertaken as part of training, deployment and capacity-building. Volunteers interviewed who were new to the sector valued the training's module on the principles; senior volunteers felt they did not need it. No European organisations disagreed (67% agreed) that their involvement with EUAV increased the level of knowledge of aid principles among project partners while 9 out of 10 HOs were happy with their end-beneficiaries' improved knowledge of these principles.

General Finding. One Member State noted this: *'The[Annual] reports and [Annual] work plan for 2017 focus mainly on the capacity building of organisations so they are able to send and receive volunteers and the training of the volunteers to a certain standard. Whilst these are necessary activities to deliver results, there is little / no information on the extent to which capacity has actually been increased by these activities or what type of capacity EUAV is aiming to increase and so in what way organisations will be better placed to provide needs-based humanitarian assistance and build resilience.'* This view was also heard from European organisations. Non-participants are happy with the processes they have in place to address humanitarian action and would only need EUAV to enhance local capacity and humanitarian results, while participating organisations wish there was more focus on impact (on the end-beneficiaries as much as the organisations) in the application processes.

EQ2: Overall conclusions on the fit between the types of action and the objectives.

The types of action detailed in the Regulations are relevant to the EUAV Initiative. There are actions which help define EUAV and provide its USP (unique selling proposition). These include the standards, and the Technical Assistance and Capacity Building grants (such grants being increasingly rare in the sector). There are actions without which EUAV could not operate as the Regulations require: certification prepares organisations for engagement and no volunteer can be deployed without first being selected and then trained. There are actions for which the extent of their relevance will become clearer in the next three years: the database and the network are too young to be properly assessed. Without awareness-raising, EUAV will not be understood and participation will be limited.

The sections above have shown to which objectives each type of action is most relevant, and it is significant that Objective 4 is hardly mentioned. The action on communication and awareness-raising shares language with Objective 4 but Objective 4 is limited (to humanitarian principles) while the action is expected to be very broad. The action is highly relevant, for the more successful the awareness-raising the more likelihood of success in meeting the 5 Objectives, but Objective 4 is not well served by any of the actions.

In conclusion, we see no reason to reduce EUAV's emphasis on any of the actions; indeed many of them are holistically relevant to EUAV or are interdependent. There are some lessons for the EUAV Initiative however. First, for some actions the relevance or perceived relevance is not optimal:

- The standards are seen as complicated or over-detailed by some organisations (and not followed by all organisations), so their relevance may be restricted.

- Despite the intentions of the Calls for Proposal[50], there is no requirement for organisations to move from either TA or CB to certification or deployment, which reduces their relevance. This does, conversely, strengthen their relevance to the capacity problem identified in the impact assessment since any form of CB is acceptable within EUAV (see a) and b) in the definition)[51]/[52].

- Certification, as it is currently performed, has had a mixed reception (shown for example in the low numbers of existing DG ECHO Partners being certified), which questions its perceived relevance in its current form. A compromise on certification for FPA partners may raise numbers

Second, there is a need for EUAV to focus more on results to justify the actions. The forthcoming project monitoring and evaluations may succeed in this and allay feelings like the one expressed by a Member State: "*[However relevant the initiative remains…] Three years into the programme, the focus should shift to the impact the programme is having and away from putting the measures in place to enable deployment of volunteers."*

Recommendations

- (R1.2) EUAV partners 'comply' (the word used in the Regulation) at the time of their certification, and the certification letter informs organisations that they will be subject to monitoring to ensure that they are compliant in practice (Regulation no 1244 Article 36/2 confirms this). However it is suggested that a documented follow-up system be established seeking assurance that certified organisations (particularly HOs) are complying with the standards once volunteers are deployed. This could to be done as part of the regular monitoring of SOs, on field missions, and requesting input from volunteers.
- (R1.3) Field missions revealed that individuals / HOs had highly varying understanding of what is requested in terms of communication: it is suggested to improve information provided to partners on expected communication measures.
- (R1.4) The focus on process (preparing organisations for volunteer management, or just building their capacity in ways which will not directly benefit EUAV) should be a lower priority in the next phase of EUAV. Deployments, and measuring the impact of strengthened capacity, need to be the priority. While certification and deployment are the explicit aim in Calls for Proposals, TA and CB projects are not seen as proving to be the precursor to deployment and certification.
- (R1.5) It is recommended to consider the establishment of a Roster: Annex 4 addresses an idea for how a volunteer pool could overcome the limitations of the recruitment process and the database in satisfying SOs, volunteers, Member States and HOs, and supporting Objectives 1, 3 and 5. A change in the EUAV Regulations would be required.

Further issue to be considered

In the view of the evaluators there is a new action which should be added to the EUAV Initiative, though it may require a change in the Regulations. This is about project funding.

[50] Further details of how this works can be found in the Case Study in Annex 8 - Case study on Apprenticeship, Recruitment and Deployment.

[51] "The objective of this call is to strengthen the capacities of sending and hosting organisations intending to participate in the EU Aid Volunteers initiative and to ensure compliance with the standards and procedures regarding candidate volunteers and EU Aid Volunteers in order to apply for certification which is required in order to deploy EU Aid Volunteers." 2016 Call, TA and CB

[52] Defined in calls for proposals as a) (Internal) organisational development, i.e. capacity building and technical assistance for the proper internal running of the organisation b) (External) organisational development, i.e. capacity building with regard to how the organisation interacts and engages with other stakeholders. C) other types of capacity building, of a specific technical or thematic nature notably with regards to the technical requirements set by the standards and procedures of Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 375/2014 with a view to certifying prospective sending and hosting organisations; and technical capacities in sectors linked to humanitarian aid."

Only 3 of 13 responses to the HO survey were satisfied with the funds and resources available to ensure project realisation. This, and worries about impact and accountability voiced to evaluators during field missions, lead us to propose a new action.

This is for DG ECHO to consider allocating small amounts of funding for operational activities during deployments. Volunteers and HOs have noted with dissatisfaction that some operational roles require funding in order to have impact but, unless the EUAV is deployed as part of another project then such funding is not available. Examples include:

- A volunteer whose task was to do a needs assessment of a local farming community. The work raised expectations that a hoe or some seeds might be made available.
- A volunteer who used their own funding to buy materials which teachers could use to construct their idea of a disaster-resistant building. For one school this was an expense she could bear but it was not possible for every school visit.
- A volunteer whose task description required an output which required her to invest in materials. The funding could not be made available and she felt demotivated at not being able to deliver.

As one European organisation commented in the OPC: 'The risk is finally that volunteers are deployed but deprived of tasks, and that host partners are not in a position to work properly (with the help of volunteers) for communities.' Such funds are not always available from the HO's reserves or from a grant and are not included in chapter 6.2 of the deployment call for proposal guidelines for 2017.

One ECHO Field Office advised that they would gladly hold onto a pot of funding and dole it out against receipts for small sums. Several suggestions were made that there be an allowance of a maximum of, say, €500 for any one individual or €10,000 for any one project.

4.1.3 Fit between skills of volunteers and the need of hosting organisations

EQ 3 Fit between the profiles and skill sets of selected volunteers and the needs of hosting organisations.

The processes outlined in the Regulations aim to ensure the volunteers' skills and competences are relevant *(see footnote related to the use of the word profiles[53] in EQ3)*. The task descriptions define the tasks, competences and objectives required from a volunteer, and recruitment and selection is carried out, by SO and HO, against those descriptions. The training can develop competences and can sharpen the volunteer's awareness of how to use their skills, while an apprenticeship can add organisational and technical context to existing skills before deployment. Continuous and mandatory mentoring and management aims to enhance the skills and competences through support of the volunteer, and through the ongoing assessment of performance and self-development.

The evaluation of the EIAV Pilot Projects had noted (chapter 3.2.10): "*No type of intervention (preparedness, emergency response, LRRD) etc. appeared to be more or less suitable for the EUAV, as long as volunteers were suitably matched (in terms of skills, expertise and resilience) to the activity."* This emphasis remains: what the regulations, SOs, HOs and communities are looking to address relies on the skills and expertise of the volunteers selected.

[53] The inclusion of the word 'profile' in the evaluation criteria is puzzling as it is not a word defined or consistently used in the regulations. The phrase 'competence profile' appears in regulation n°375/4. 'Skills' is used most often in the regulations as separate from competences (in 1398/1e and 2e for example) and they are not, for example, a required part of the task descriptions or vacancy announcements. Equally, skills cannot be equated to the technical competences of Annex 1 as these are defined (1398/2) as 'knowledge'. In 1398/2a skills are defined as included in competences and refer to the European Reference Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, which includes language. In answering this question the evaluators have taken 'profiles and skill sets' to incorporate all competences i.e. the knowledge, skills and attitudes a volunteer can offer to a host organisation.

The evaluation question is specific to HOs. SOs have a role in the definition of needs and the selection of volunteers. Related to the main evaluation question, are questions on the standards being used by HOs and SOs and on problems which mitigate against the best use of volunteers' skills: these are set out in detail in Annex 7 - Detailed analysis of sub-questions related to EQ3. To answer the question the evaluation has used experiences from field missions (16 HOs interviewed), EUAV documents, interviews in Europe and surveys (22 completed responses received). There are no deployment reports available at this stage of EUAV to judge the impact of volunteer skills on the communities/beneficiaries.

Findings

HOs visited were generally happy with the results of the selection and training: they have received the skills they required. One noted that: *"We are promoting our programs [to other potential providers of volunteers] but the EU-Aid volunteers fill a gap for expertise and knowledge that other volunteer don't provide*". Most HOs, when asked, said they would like their volunteers to stay on, though sometimes what they needed was a person with a flexible attitude rather than a specific skillset.

All stakeholders were, on balance, happy with the ability of the system to identify very specific skillsets and profiles, and the match of volunteer profile to the needs of the project. Just 1 out of 10 SOs was dissatisfied (in retrospect), while 3 HOs were dissatisfied, and 7 satisfied, with the 'Degree to which the expertise and skills of the international Volunteers matched actual project requirements'. HOs reported favourably on the relevance of the volunteers' skills to end-beneficiaries, but there is insufficient attestable data available directly from that source. 14 volunteers deemed the matching of their skills to the project needs to be poor or very poor, while 30 found it excellent or good. No SO was dissatisfied with the improvement in volunteer skills during deployment.

On mission and in survey responses there was a consistent thread of volunteers not being able to deploy the skills required[54]/[55], in two areas. First, related to the project: sometimes the need has changed or disappeared between needs assessment and deployment, requiring a change in skills. Sometimes the volunteer will arrive late due to drop-outs in recruitment. This was a consistent finding in field missions and 37% of volunteers' answers to the question 'information on the assignment matched the project reality' rated it poor or very poor, compared to 28% which rated it excellent or good. There were no examples, in the field missions, of volunteers unable to make valid contributions using the skills they had, and the 'flexibility' competence was valued in these circumstances. Second, related to the organisation: there were examples, from field missions and survey responses, of organisational impediments to task achievement: no budget to achieve the task, managers not understanding the task, volunteers treated as interns and not as skilled contributors. One volunteer eloquently made the case that the volunteers are recruited for their professional skills as well as their commitment, but are negatively affected by others' perceptions of the word 'volunteer'.

Conclusion

Selected volunteers have the competence profiles and skills required by the HOs. This is primarily the result of the high calibre of applicants reaching the SOs/HOs, allowing for selection of well-qualified and prepared volunteers, but also of competent task descriptions and much-valued training. There are a number of examples of where problems have arisen but these are individual

[54] Examples from the survey responses: "*The project reality was completely different from both, the terms of reference of the original vacancy, and the information about the assignment gave me during the predeploy[ment] training in [Europe]. " / "When I arrived in [country] I realize I was not going to work in [the capital] and not for [the HO] and not on that project."*

[55] Annex 7 provides further details on these issues.

rather than generic and, at this stage, are at an acceptable level. There is too little data to say whether end-beneficiaries are feeling the volunteers' skills are relevant to them.

There are issues with the use of the skills however: some volunteers doubt whether their skills are used and valued, while HOs are occasionally ill-prepared to get the best value from the volunteers. The final evaluation will want to see higher levels of satisfaction from HOs and volunteers.

Recommendations

(R1.6) It is recommended to take action to reduce the time between vacancy announcement and deployment, so that the number of drop-outs decreases;

(R1.7) Furthermore, action needs to be taken to ensure the volunteer is fulfilling a real need, and that their expectations are realistic, given the possible eighteen-month gap between needs assessment and deployment.

Issues to be considered

1- In relation to the use of skills – and to improve volunteer satisfaction and increase likely impact – the evaluation offers a number of suggestions:

- If the timing gap between needs assessment and deployment remains as long as it is at present (often 15 months), then SOs and HOs need to reassess the need before final selection and DG ECHO needs to be flexible in allowing changes of task descriptions at this stage. We strongly suggest that the volunteer be engaged in these conversations and that a final, realistic, agreed task assignment be part of the contract signed during the induction at the SO.
- HO staff need to be forewarned about the tasks of the EUAVs, and managers need to be assessed for their willingness and capability to allow the work to happen.
- Referring to EUAVs as Young Professionals[56], or similar, may contribute to motivation, acceptance and therefore impact.
- DG ECHO / EACEA and some of the main SOs should sit together and talk through ideal solutions to the question of changes in task due to delay or change in need. Questions could be: 'Under what circumstances, and with what conditions, will DG ECHO allow a deployment to be cancelled because the delay in recruitment means the likely impact in the field is considerably reduced?' and 'Under what circumstances, and what conditions, will DG ECHO allow the duration or the identified task of a deployment to be changed because the original need has altered?'

2 - The evaluation furthermore suggests that DG ECHO and EACEA use terms (such as profile, skill-set) consistently in their communication and in the Regulation when the legal review is undertaken, though this lack of clarity has no noted impact on the efficiency or objectives of EUAV.

4.1.4 Overall conclusions on the extent to which the Initiative is relevant

Not all objectives are formulated to be relevant to every stakeholder and not every type of action is constructed to be relevant to every objective. Taking this into account, the evaluation concludes that the Initiative is highly relevant. First, the needs highlighted in the Impact Assessment are being directly addressed by the actions of EUAV, with the possible exception of surge capacity [57]. Second,

[56] or "EUAV Senior Professional" if this is the case.

[57] However, 10% of budget of the thematic priority deployment is allowed for 'support for emergency response operations' (Regulation No 375, Annex 1) but to date no procedure has been developed to allow for such deployments, and no demand or request for such deployments have been mentioned so far by the stakeholders. Response to armed conflict is not permitted under the Regulations (No. 375/14).

the objectives are relevant to their intended stakeholders, particularly in regard to strengthening capacity. Third, all the types of action help to fulfil the objectives to an extent which justifies their being funded by the EUAV Initiative.

There are areas where a different emphasis would increase relevance. First, the process-focussed actions (technical assistance, capacity building) have strong relevance, but would be more relevant to the EUAV Initiative if their outcome were more tightly linked with EUAV's aim of sending volunteers (per Article 1). Second, the wording of some objectives (especially 1, 4 and 5) are limiting, and slight changes could enhance the relevance of the Initiative in relation to communication, consensus and, particularly, impact.

Third, while the objectives are, to a large extent, relevant to volunteers and organisations, they make insufficient reference to the needs of the end-beneficiaries, and interviews and surveys clearly show this as the reason organisations and volunteers are engaging in EUAV.

This links to a sense conveyed by many respondents, and assessed as valid by the evaluators, that impact is not considered as important as it should be. It is the impact of the actions on organisations, and the resulting expected increased capacity to respond to humanitarian need, which will ultimately assure DG ECHO, Member States and other stakeholders that EUAV is relevant to the needs of end-beneficiaries as well as to its other stakeholders. This information will mainly be obtained from final reports of projects and ex-post questionnaires, which are not yet available.

Finally, it will be these reports and evaluations of projects (TA, CB and deployment) which will have an important role in persuading stakeholders about the relevance of the Initiative. These reports can allay the doubts expressed in the evaluation of pilot projects (page 4), as to whether EUAV is the most relevant means of addressing humanitarian needs (or reaches the most vulnerable as required by the principle of humanity), and whether volunteers are the most technically competent people to address needs. One Member State reaction to the five operational objectives was: *"However, I'm not convinced that the EUAV is the best way to do/achieve {the objectives}, that the EUAV is the best use of the EU financial resources, and that the EUAV is a very relevant instrument to provide humanitarian assistance and to help people in need."* Our findings are, though, that organisations and volunteers have a range of needs and EUAV is proving relevant according to its objectives.

4.2 Coherence

EQ – 4 To what extent was the Initiative **coherent** with related EU activities, particularly under the Humanitarian Aid, Development, and Civil Protection instruments?

Findings

I - The Initiative has been able to achieve synergies with humanitarian activities, leading to catalytic effects (if not, why not?)

For all the interviewed professional international humanitarian actors who were not yet engaged in EUAV, it was not clear what precisely the contribution of EUAV could be in the strengthening of the humanitarian space as they see it. The evaluation team acknowledges this point of view, expressed by actors who are essentially implementing highly specialised humanitarian operations in the field. Despite security training, the EUAV volunteers cannot be deployed in (emergency) response operations. What EUAV can do is actually related to DRR, LRRD and development, and does not directly concern life-saving humanitarian aid actions. However, it has to be noted that

support services to emergency response actions is explicitly permitted by the EUAV Regulation[58]. During interviews and by studying project documentation the evaluation team could not find proof of the systematic use of this option in EUAV co-funded projects[59]

This limitation of opportunities for synergies – except for some sending organisations who are already working with volunteers like GVC - is not conducive to expectations of enhanced humanitarian effectiveness, nor to EUAV certification.

Stated reasons by other (i.e. not focused on volunteering) sending organisations for being certified by EUAV are to safeguard opportunities for EUAV funding in the future, or they are very pragmatically related to funding such as for the capacity building of existing networks of local partners (most often country offices of EU-based sending organisations) in host countries, which require capacity building.

In this context, at the UN level, UNHCR describes its position as follows:

Before being fully informed about EUAV's pros and cons, there was a management decision to take part in the Initiative. When a clearer picture developed, the focus of the decision shifted gradually from (originally) using EUAV volunteers in Africa (Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania) - but local offices outlined that they had other priorities/emergencies than taking care of volunteers - to (in the future) using them in Latin America, due to a more stable environment, and more time for coaching volunteers.

As such, EUAV does not respond to key expectations from UNHCR - i.e. to rapidly provide additional resources in the case of a humanitarian crisis, as UNVs can do. Participation in EUAV is therefore seen rather as a longer-term investment; trained EUAV volunteers are expected to remain available after deployment for more missions, through rosters. Other UN agencies (UNICEF, WFP) were also said to lack interest in the EUAV Initiative for the same reasons.

For the Red Cross, the situation is quite similar. Out of the 12 RC national societies registered under the FPA (to which must be added IFRC and ICRC as International Organisations), only two have so far been certified (Germany and - in 2017 – Finland), although they have not taken part in any EUAV co-funded project[60]. In addition, two other national societies have expressed interest in being certified by EUAV[61].

Coherence and resulting synergies are also possible with other humanitarian initiatives such as the NOHA Master course, which aims at professionalism and helps deploy graduates as employees or volunteers, sometimes to HQs but mostly to the field (64%) in humanitarian aid and development. The NOHA Master is much more in depth than the EUAV training (which NOHA describes as "introductory"), and could therefore complement it for some volunteers. In line with the WHS commitments, NOHA's university degree provides more capacity for analysis, management, anthropology and geopolitics, helping graduates to assess a humanitarian situation in all its dimensions (a fact also outlined by VSO). Some short-term courses (5-days) from NOHA on specific issues (protection, logistics, chain management) are also quite complementary and could possibly be added to the EUAV training curriculum[62] – provided that the length of the said curriculum remains manageable.

The perception from the hosting organisations reached by the survey was different from that of the EU or international organisations, for specific reasons. Out of the 22 respondents, a large majority (17) was also involved in development activities on top of humanitarian ones, which provided for a

[58] The EUAV Regulation in its Annex 1 explicitly indicate under the thematic priority 1 "Deployment of EU Aid Volunteers to support and complement humanitarian aid" that 10% of the related budget (with a variation of +-8 %) is permitted to be used for "Support for emergency response operations …".

[59] In one observed case, an EUAV volunteer supported the development of a remote monitoring system to be used in emergency response in Syria during his deployment in a neighbouring country.

[60] The German Red Cross has however participated in the EUAV pilot phase with leading one major capacity building project (VinCAB)

[61] The French RC (FPA partner) and the Italian RC.

[62] In line with Articles 6.1, 8, 9.3, and 12.1 of Regulation 375/2014.

wider scope of work for the EUAV volunteers. In that large framework, the capacity building provided by EUAV was clearly the most appreciated feature: 18 of the 22 hosting organisations had received such support, and 94% were either satisfied or fully satisfied with it. Most respondents also judged that the EUAV support addressed the actual needs of their organisation (95%) of the beneficiary communities (87%). All (100%) were willing to cooperate in a new capacity building project. It should be noted that these hosting organisations were slightly less positive when asked whether the EUAV volunteers themselves addressed a need or gap (54%).

II - The Initiative has been able to achieve synergies with development activities, leading to catalytic effects

There has been limited cooperation up to now between EUAV and EU development activities. DG DEVCO in Brussels stated that contacts have remained essentially at the informal working level. It should however be noted that some volunteers are working on DG DEVCO-funded programmes and, if this is to remain acceptable to DG ECHO, then more formal discussions with DG DEVCO could provide positive guidance for SOs and HOs. EVS took part in some coordination meetings - owing also to relations with EACEA.

Coherence with DG DEVCO could in particular be enhanced regarding resilience. The joint Strategic Approach to Resilience[63] foresees e.g. several angles for potential synergies where EUAV volunteers could operate out of the most risk-prone contexts, under the following aspects defined further in the Strategic Approach to Resilience: economic resilience, protracted crises climate change and environmental degradation, and migrations and forced displacements.

III - The Initiative has been able to achieve synergies with Civil Protection activities, leading to catalytic effects

Some fragmented examples of cooperation have been found in the field between EUAV volunteers and Civil Protection (CP) activities, such as with the set-up of local CP brigades in Nicaragua. In Brussels, DG ECHO is aiming at aligning the CP work plan and monitoring to include EUAVs in the future, although Civil Protection is not mentioned as such in any EUAV calls for proposals. There is, for example no activity undertaken to involve CP actors (who work with volunteers). On the other hand, the main focus of CP is still on the participating states (Member States and recipient third countries). Only for the neighbourhood policy countries is there finance within Civil Protection for prevention and preparedness actions. The advisory missions to third countries are not coherent with EUAV either as those missions require a request from a national government and provide direct advice to the government.

One isolated example of coherence could be found in the BE DRIN project in the Balkans, where the Italian "Protezione Civile" has led a CB project to stimulate volunteerism. However, it should be outlined that both EUAV and UCPM have a focus on disaster risk reduction - as this is the main change of the UCPM legislation in 2013 - and by the adoption of the Sendai framework as guiding principle.

Conclusion

The proposed contribution of EUAV to the humanitarian space does not yet appear clearly, which in itself does not favour synergies with regular humanitarian activities at this point. A number of EUAV partners have so far sought certification for reasons that are rather more based on "safeguarding opportunities" than on expectations of coherence with existing humanitarian activities. Particularly, the option to engage volunteers in supporting emergency response actions is one of the fields which could be further communicated and developed in order to support attracting more buy-in. Coherence with DG DEVCO and Civil Protection is not yet institutionalised.

[63] Joint Communication JOIN(2017) 21 final of 7th June 2017 "A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's external action".

Considering the large discrepancies in responses from the international humanitarian actors and the local hosting organisations when asked about the coherence of EUAV with needs, it can be concluded that CB and TA activities, and deployment outcomes of the EUAV Initiative are contributing rather more to the Localisation Agenda of the World Humanitarian Summit, than to strengthening EU humanitarian activities *per se*.

Recommendations

- *(R2.1)* It is recommended that DG ECHO continuously strengthens the alignment of EUAV with the humanitarian and civil protection activities within DG ECHO and reinforces the Initiative's relationship with DG DEVCO to increase opportunities for collaboration.

- *(R2.2)* It is recommended to also intensify promotion of EUAV at humanitarian stakeholder level, as the evaluation revealed that, many humanitarian actors who are not yet engaged are not fully informed about opportunities of EUAV and the possible benefits of aligning regular humanitarian aid operations with EUAV components.

Further issues to be considered

- It is suggested that DG ECHO considers promoting two-way opportunities for NOHA graduates to work as volunteers, and for EUAV volunteers to follow their training with a NOHA Master, or specific NOHA short-term courses. EUAV training could be transformed into university "credits" (Bologna system, perhaps 10 credits) and could in this way become very compatible with the NOHA Master (120 credits).
- Since 2016, NOHA signed a MoU with the "Human Surge" roster for its graduates; EUAV could also consider using this roster for its former trainees.
- There might be some complementarity in the future between EUAV and EVS – provided that the projects happen jointly in the geographical focus of the 3 EVS "windows". As such, complementarity could potentially be found on the ground between more professional EUAV volunteers and the less trained / experienced ones deployed by EVS.

4.3 EU Added Value

EQ – 5 To what extent did the Initiative provide an EU Added Value? Issues to consider are e.g. how the Commission has drawn on its specific role and mandate to create a specific added value, which could/would not be achieved by Member States and other actors. This includes examining the added value of the Initiative compared to other, existing volunteering initiatives.

Findings

I - The Commission has drawn on its comparative advantages (role, mandate, principled approach, resources, procedures) to create a specific added value, which could/would not be achieved by Member States and other actors

The key added values of the centralised management of EUAV by the Commission are related to the potential of an EU-wide, transnational approach for humanitarian volunteering. They are generally listed by the stakeholders as follows:

- Integrated approach (not fragmented among countries)
- Larger available budget (particularly for technical assistance and capacity building with a focus on volunteer management)
- Cooperation opportunities with neighbouring countries
- Cooperation between actors of varying backgrounds and organisational sizes (e.g. humanitarian actors / civil protection actors / volunteer sending organisations) to the mutual benefit of the partners
- Transnational level for all
- More opportunities of projects

Next to positive and supportive statements by stakeholders related to EU added value, a larger number of stakeholders however doubt the statement "What the EUAV initiative aims to achieve cannot be achieved by other Member States initiatives or initiatives of other actors". This varied position becomes visible when looking at Member States responses: 3 out of 18 respondents fully agree, 8 slightly agree and 4 disagree with the statement. At the level of SOs, less than 50% of the respondents agree with the statement (6 out of 14).

II - There is added value of the Initiative compared to other, existing volunteering initiatives

FPA and FAFA implementing partners of DG ECHO generally agree that the key added value of EUAV compared to other humanitarian volunteering schemes is the quality of the EUAV training. However, they also outline that there is a risk of '2-speed volunteering' (different training, compensation packages, relations with hosting organisations) inside UN, Red Cross, EU National Civil Protection Bodies and NGOs should these partners use both EUAV and their own standard volunteers' schemes.

It should be noted that the partners who took part in the EUAV Pilot Phase outlined the positive flexibility of the initial approach[64], which they do not perceive in the current EUAV; such statements help explain why some of the participants to the Pilot projects have so far refrained from being certified by EUAV or have not yet applied for EUAV funding.

EVS, a specialized EU volunteering programme, part of Erasmus, emphasizes the added value of the quality training of EUAV:

- much more professional compared other schemes including EVS;
- training online is an advantage (in EVS, there is only face-to-face training).

One observer, although agreeing with the quality of EUAV training, nevertheless noticed a certain lack of 'overall humanitarian perspective' regarding SDGs, for example (UN Sustainable Development Goals).

Although not itself a volunteering body, NOHA outlined as an advantage that EUAV may allow established professionals from the public or private sectors to "give back" some of their time and experience by volunteering in HA. While some of the EUAV senior volunteers highlighted this as a key motivation factor for their engagement, SOs which have traditionally used employee volunteering have not been able to do so for EUAV because of long mobilisation periods, the training requirements and the expected assignment duration.

III - The Initiative has been able to enhance EU visibility and image

Within the EU, the training and capacity building activities that took place in the various countries have encouraged some NGOs from the new Eastern "EU13" countries to associate with the operational environment of DG ECHO. Among the 30 sending organisations that were certified between 2015 and 2017, 2 were based in the Czech Republic, 2 in Hungary, 1 in Slovenia and 1 in Estonia. Only one of those (People in Need from Czech Republic) was already an FPA member in 2017. The percentage (20% of certified sending organisations) is significantly higher than the

[64] "Overall, the pilot action was also robust to the extent that multiple models / approaches were trialled for each 'dimension' of the EUAV" (Final report on Pilot Actions page 2, July 2014)

overall share of EU13-based NGOs among the FPA partners (7 out of 204, or 3%). However, the extent to which EUAV contributed to an enhanced EU image as a result of this extended partnership could not be measured.

Interest shown by potential volunteers in the social media for the EUAV applications was quite large, which testifies to the positive image of EU volunteering. In 2015, *GVC* posted 30 vacancies and received 1,006 applications (670 female and 336 male). *Concern* received 600 applications for their 25 posts for the 2015 deployment. *Alianza por la Solidaridad* receives on average nearly 18 applicants per post - although the variation is huge, with 90 applications for some less skilled posts in more attractive countries like Nicaragua[65].

In the countries of deployment, there is no evidence that the EUAV Initiative has been able to enhance EU visibility to date. Field missions outlined how difficult it is to disseminate the expression of European Solidarity through EUAV volunteers, despite the guidance provided. The understanding of the EU differs from country to country, but is generally linked to funding rather than principles. This is hard to reverse. Volunteers feel ill-suited for communication work; volunteering is not a prestigious job; some pleaded that they were just not natural communicators; and SOs do not display an equal understanding of communication needs. Volunteers furthermore tend to have closer relations with their SOs or HOs (who do the recruitment, induction, contracting and field care) than with the EU.

NGOs are also doubtful about the level of visibility that can be achieved on the ground by so few volunteers, and stress that such communication should preferably be done by DG ECHO.

In addition, concerns were expressed about shared visibility and communication (or the lack thereof) between EUAV and key-stakeholders such as the Red Cross or NOHA. IFRC is not prepared to accommodate EUAV visibility in possible joint deployments of volunteers, as Red Cross activities usually rely on a strong image, which is not to be diluted or confused.

NOHA, which has been consistently supported by DG ECHO for the past 23 years and has enabled some 3,500 university students to graduate in humanitarian studies, was critical of the lack of coherence or complementarity in DG ECHO's communication between the two instruments of NOHA and EUAV, despite the existing opportunities.

Several examples of poor practices were outlined. There are no cross-references between the two programmes on DG ECHO's website, for reciprocal promotion. When a DG ECHO staff member comes to make a speech to NOHA graduates, there is not a word about EUAV opportunities for a field experience, and no leaflets have been distributed. In the current NOHA mobile exhibition which is going to most EU universities (and to the World Humanitarian Summit), the panels about DG ECHO (designed by DG ECHO itself) do not mention EUAV.

Conclusion

The centralised management of EUAV by the Commission provides added value in terms of integrated transnational approach, larger budget and more project opportunities. The quality of training provided by EUAV to their volunteers is also a clear added value compared to other existing volunteering schemes. There is, however, no evidence that the EUAV Initiative has significantly enhanced EU visibility and image so far.

Issues to be considered

- It is recommended that DG ECHO should better link NOHA and EUAV in terms of communication and cross-opportunities in order to gain synergies. This would help to make the initiative better known to prospective volunteers and the overall coherence of EU humanitarian instruments would be strengthened at the same time.

[65] It should also be noted that there are far more applications from Southern Europe, perhaps because of the strength of volunteering there. Out of 517 applications, *La Guilde* received 161 from Italians, 122 from Spanish and 99 from French would-be volunteers. Relatively few applications originate from EU13 countries (23 from Romania to *La Guilde*).

4.4 Effectiveness

4.4.1 Achievements of objectives through actions

EQ – 6 To what extent have the objectives listed in the TOR under section 2.2 been achieved through the implementation of the actions (covering both pre-deployment and deployment)?

The EUAV Regulation establishes **five operational objectives contributing to one overall objective** (see chapter 2.2). When reviewing the operational objectives, it appears that the framework they provide is (a) generic, (b) demanding and (c) not very specific. This needs to be recognised when answering the effectiveness question in this section.

For each of the EUAV operational objectives, an analysis is provided below, and wherever possible evidence from interviews, field missions and surveys is provided. However, a quantitative assessment of outputs / outcomes of the projects was hardly possible for the evaluation as final reports on projects were not available at time of the evaluation. Therefore, in line with the scope of the TOR, the following analysis has to be an overall assessment rather than a project level review.

Objective 1: Contribute to increasing and improving the capacity of the Union to provide humanitarian aid

When looking at the overall average annual budget of the EUAV Initiative (about 20 m EURO) and the diversity of objectives, and comparing it with e.g. the annual budget managed by DG ECHO (about 1 Billion EURO, field presence and over 200 of the largest humanitarian actors as implementation partners, etc.) the potential impact of EUAV is clear. Certainly, any investment in humanitarian assistance has an impact on the overall capacity but, although EUAV is in a way pivotal and addresses cross-cutting issues (e.g. EU volunteering standards for the humanitarian sector), its impact is clearly limited by its size.

Engaged sending and hosting organisations see a clear impact – Confirmed by interviews and survey responses, according to most of the sending and all hosting organizations, EUAV contributed to increasing and improving the capacity of the Union to provide humanitarian assistance. 77% of the SOs confirmed that the activities co-funded by EUAV led to increasing and improving the capacity of the Union to provide humanitarian aid and 100% of the hosting organizations confirmed that the capacity building successfully addressed actual gaps. Those gaps / needs varied from strengthening the internal financial management processes to expertise on delivering disaster risk resilience training. Comments from several non-participating organisations included the fact that EUAV funding was not large enough for them to engage with, especially when combined with the requirement for certification and consortium-building.

EUAV co-funding is not systematically informed by established EU needs assessment - The EUAV calls for proposals include the objective to increase the capacity to deliver humanitarian aid explicitly. Despite this fact, the global or specific needs assessments established for humanitarian planning at EU level (e.g. those resulting in the HIPS) are until now not actively informing the formulation of the calls and are therefore not criteria for the selection of co-funded projects. Needs assessments in the context of the responses to the calls are purely based on the applicants' analysis (which is in line with the EUAV Regulation).

According to DG ECHO, the calls were kept generic to enlarge the possible pool of interested organisations.

Many EUAV volunteers provide support services[66] in field offices - The EUAV deployment projects were all addressing identified needs based on needs assessments conducted by the partners / applicant. However, it was observed by the evaluation team that many of the co-funded projects focussed on internal support services to the sending organisations (i.e. in support of field offices of the sending organisation) and thus only indirectly contributed to improving the capacity to provide humanitarian aid. 29% of the deployed volunteers worked only on internal affairs of the HO, 37% worked partly on internal affairs of the HO

EUAV volunteer involvement is limited by Regulation requirements - EUAV limits the possible involvement of EU Aid volunteers and thus limits their spectrum of activities in the humanitarian sector (i.e. through country lists, non-involvement in response actions, lengthy deployment procedure, etc.). The chosen system of calls for proposals implies, that volunteers need to be deployed based on needs formulated at the time of proposal preparation. The identified needs can be outdated at the time of actual deployment due to the lengthy procedures (this was reported several times by SOs / HOs which often reacted flexibly and found a solution).

Technical assistance projects focused on volunteer management - The co-funded technical assistance projects all focus on improving volunteer management at sending organisation level in the EU. In three of the eight projects, attention is also paid to the improved knowledge on the EU consensus of humanitarian aid and disaster risk reduction. This does not lead directly to the improvement of the Union to provide humanitarian assistance, but indirectly it can have positive effects if the organisations will enhance their involvement in humanitarian aid and international volunteering (e.g. EUAV and others) in the years to come.

Capacity building funds fill a gap and contribute to localisation - The co-funded capacity building projects focused also on improving volunteer management and related systems as well as improving the knowledge of the EU consensus on humanitarian aid. Altogether 5 of the 8 capacity building projects included other activities[67] such as targeted capacity building at HO level, e.g. disaster risk reduction, resulting in direct impact on humanitarian needs and response capacities. The specific focus on improving volunteer management and internal process improvement related thereto one of the major added-values of EUAV, as stated by the majority of SO and HO in the interviews. EUAV is particularly attractive in this context as the EUAV Initiative is rare in offering humanitarian funding for the SOs' internal capacity building.

Critical view on tasks assigned to EUAV volunteers - During the field missions the evaluation team observed situations in which the actual added-value of the use of international EUAV volunteers from Europe is to be doubted. For example the use of junior volunteers for financial management support, extensive report writing tasks, auxiliary office works, could also have been done by local staff at lower costs (from donor perspective). In one witnessed case, the arrival of an EUAV volunteer may have been a factor in the dismissal of a local staff member.

Objective 2: Improve the skills, knowledge and competences of volunteers in the field of humanitarian aid and the terms and conditions of their engagement.

The establishment of EUAV included extensive work on the development of volunteering standards (including the terms and conditions under which volunteers should be involved). In this respect the set-up of EUAV resulted in a consistent European standards framework for the responsible involvement of volunteers. The defined objective furthermore implies that the idea of the initiative is not to arrange a onetime involvement in the humanitarian sector, but to improve the skills of volunteers to enhance their quality of work and the ability to work in the humanitarian sector.

[66] i.e. position in which the financial reporting / logistic support / HR support at office level are main tasks (as compared to "operational" involvement at community level or building local capacities in DRR, etc.)

[67] The proportion of the project funds vary from **10% to 50% according to a rough estimation** of the evaluation team (calculation difficult as no detailed results based budget breakdown is provided).

Volunteers highlight the importance of the career development effect - This implicit element of the objective perfectly matches the reasons why volunteers engage in the EUAV Initiative. Volunteers express as main reasons for engagement, helping people in need (100%), career development (97%) and gathering working expertise (96%). The initiative however does not yet contain any structured and systemised provision[68] which would enable continued engagement under EUAV or elsewhere to make use of the skills acquired by the volunteers after their initial training and deployment. Setting up and managing a roster of EUAV volunteers who are interested in continued engagement could be part of a solution in this context.

EUAV volunteer profiles suggest an "expert volunteer scheme" - The interviews with volunteers show that the vast majority of the volunteers had at least an internship or an earlier volunteer position before applying to the EU Aid volunteer mechanism and besides this the survey shows that 94% of the volunteers have a master degree. In terms of the quality of selected volunteers, EUAV is more of an "expert volunteer scheme" than a first step into the sector – this is particularly shown in the deployment call for proposal of 2017 which states: "*Capacity building activities should be undertaken by senior volunteers or junior volunteers with significant experience in capacity building and supervised by a senior professional."*

Very good ratings for the centralised training organised by EUAV – Related to the actual improvement of the skills, knowledge and competences, the assessment of the volunteers was gathered by a web based survey. The results are somewhat limited as the majority of the volunteers did not yet complete their deployment.[69] However, 90% of the volunteers call the centrally organised training by the EUAV Initiative useful and value-adding for them, improving their skills and knowledge in the field of humanitarian aid. The induction by the respective sending organisations was evaluated less positively (69% called it adequate and good quality). Reasons for this are, according to the responses of the volunteers, the high quality of the EUAV training (benchmark) and the overlap of contents between induction training and the EUAV training.

Objective 3: Build the capacity of hosting organizations and foster volunteering in third countries.

The capacity building projects within the EUAV Initiative are specifically targeted to build capacities at the level of hosting organisations (third country actors). In 2015 and 2016, EUAV co-funded 8 projects based on the response to the calls for proposals. In addition, the calls for deployment projects can also contain capacity building components as one possible and eligible objective of deployment projects. This objective was part of all deployment projects financed in 2015 and 2016. In some projects this is only achieved by the capacity delivered through the volunteers, in other projects specific trainings are conducted to build the capacity.

Impact of capacity building appreciated by host organisations - The overall appreciation and evaluation of the capacity building projects is according to 93% of the survey responses good. The same amount of hosting organisations confirm that the capacity building leads to actual improvement of the overall capacity of their organisations – and 69% of the hosting organisations confirm that the capacity building projects lead to strengthening of the hosting organisations' volunteer management capacity. Also in interviews, both hosting organisations and sending organisations confirmed the tangible strengthening of the hosting organisation due to project implementation.

[68] There is however a database of deployed and returned volunteers which is "manually handled" by the DG ECHO EUAV team. However, this is not a systemized roster based on functions and availabilities of returned EUAV volunteers accessible to humanitarian actors (see Annex 4 - Reflection on the establishment of a pool / roster of volunteers).

[69] Questionnaires of the volunteers after return are planned in the initiative, but due to the very limited amount of volunteers deployed until now not yet conducted. For the evaluation of the effectiveness of the initiative this follow up is very important and should not be limited to a one time survey but also to surveys in a later stage (e.g. 1 or 5 years after deployment).

EUAV addresses both local and international volunteering, the latter more intensively - The objective of fostering volunteering in third countries consists of two components: fostering local volunteering and fostering international volunteering. All EUAV funded CB projects cover both international and national volunteer management and local volunteering. The contribution of the EUAV co-funded projects to foster volunteering in third countries is however limited. 76% of the hosting organisations which had volunteers were already involved in other international schemes for volunteer hosting. The specific impact of the EUAV CB projects on international volunteering is foremost qualitative as both the hosting and sending organisations interviewed stated unanimously that the standards set by the EUAV Initiative assure a qualitative well organised approach to international volunteer management.

Few certifications of hosting organisations directly associated to capacity building projects - The capacity building projects led to a limited amount of certified hosting organisations. As of July 2017 only 5 hosting organisations involved in capacity building, have been certified during or after having been involved in capacity building projects. Most certified hosting organisations were certified "outside" capacity building projects, before or during the application of a deployment project. In this way the calls for deployment projects directly led to certification/quality improvement of the international volunteer management.

Various reasons for few certified hosting organisations as a result of CB projects – The following reasons were expressed to explain the limited number of hosting organisations certified based on the EUAV co-funded capacity building projects.

- The requirements for certification are high and it takes some time and effort to organise a successful certification process. (Both sending and hosting organisations find the process justified and reasonable but not easy to achieve.)
- Certification was not an objective of the co-funded project:
  - Some projects are not focussed on international volunteerism
  - Some projects focus on a general awareness raising of the EUAV Initiative and the certification procedure on the basis of which the organisation can choose to apply for certification
- Too early in the project: especially in the projects from the call of 2016.

Strengthening of local volunteering structures part of almost all projects - The contribution to foster local volunteering in third countries was part of most of the capacity building projects, while some of the projects (BE DRIN project in the Balkan area) were mainly focussed on fostering local volunteering structures. In the survey, 69% of the hosting organisation stated that the capacity building had a positive impact on their volunteers and volunteering structures.

Objective 4: Communicate the Union's humanitarian aid principles agreed in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

Most of the implementing tasks of the EUAV Initiative have been delegated by MoUs to the Executive Agency EACEA. One of the major tasks which remained under the direct responsibility of DG ECHO is the management of the EUAV communication actions in line with the defined communication strategy. Communication objective 3 of the EUAV external communication plan is *"to promote the value of EU solidarity in action and the EU´s humanitarian aid principles"*.

This objective can be achieved by applying the following three approaches:

- promoting and communicating the EUAV Initiative at stakeholders level and at the level of the public;
- including the messages in the training of the volunteers (for them to become "ambassadors of the principles";
- including this specific communication objective in the call for proposals of EUAV projects.

The evaluation has observed the following:

- In the general communication of the EUAV Initiative by DG ECHO, no direct attention is given to the communication of the Union´s humanitarian principles. They are not mentioned on the website of the EUAV Initiative.
- The central training of the volunteers includes in its curriculum the Union´s humanitarian aid principles which assure that these principles are known by all EUAV volunteers to be deployed. During the field missions, interviews with the volunteers however revealed that most volunteers understood their role in communication to be as providing stories from the field but not being actors in communication at local level[70].
- In the capacity building and technical assistance project, the objective "Communicating the European Union's humanitarian aid principles agreed in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and raise awareness levels and visibility of its humanitarian aid" is included. This results in activities in most of the capacity building and technical assistance projects specifically focussing on this or including this. Mostly this is done by including this issue in workshops or trainings.

Objective 5: Enhance coherence and consistency of volunteering across Member States in order to improve opportunities for Union citizens to participate in humanitarian aid activities and operations.

The survey for EU actors revealed that 43 % of the sending organisations agree that the EUAV Initiative leads to the enhancement of coherence and consistency of volunteering within the Member states, while 29% disagree with this statement

Implementation stakeholders recognise standards and call them good practice - Both hosting and sending organisations value the standards set by the EUAV Initiative as an example for good practice in volunteer management, assuring a well-organized scheme and high quality volunteer management policy and practice. Several interviewed organisations mentioned that the EUAV standards are essential and justified, and represent good practice which could also be used by other volunteer schemes.

EU is a strong and convincing label, and actions under EUAV are likely to support coherence and consistency - Several volunteers mentioned during interviews that the EU involvement ("EU label") was for them enough assurance that the quality of the arrangements is trustworthy and acceptable. Furthermore, the majority of the volunteers interviewed confirmed that they had gained a joint and European identity by participating with participants from all over Europe at the centralised training. As one participant said, "through participating at the training I felt more than a citizen of my country but being part of something bigger and important, a real European initiative". In the longer term this joint identity of engaged humanitarians will support coherence and consistency of humanitarian volunteering in Europe.

Certification requirement supports coherence and consistency - EUAV requires that sending and hosting organisations which deploy or host volunteers be certified according to an agreed standard. The act of being certified against a common and agreed standard, ensures that volunteers under EUAV co-funding are actually experiencing coherence and consistent volunteering under the European flag and identity: it doesn't matter who they travel with, their experience should be as good with any certified organisation. However, the field missions also showed that although all organisations are certified against common standards, the actual implementation reality deviates from case to case (also within a single project or amongst consortium members). In this context, the evaluation observed a lax handling of the mandatory learning and development plans, a core component of the volunteerism aspect of EUAV (e.g. these were often not regarded, not adapted to the situation). The responses of the volunteer surveys support this finding from field missions; 40% of the respondents stated that the usefulness of the L & D plans was poor or very poor.

[70] The EUAV communication plan foresees as target audience for external communication: "…interested communities and the general public in the countries where EU Aid Volunteers come from and in the countries in which they are deployed"

EUAV partners promote joint standards for a more consistent approach to humanitarian volunteering - Some of the technical assistance projects show an explicit component dedicated to the dissemination of the EUAV standards and the achievement of a more coordinated approach to volunteerism in the European Union[71]. These activities can be applauded and are expected to result in a significant number of organisations from almost all member states, being aware of the established standards. However, the evaluators did not identify evidence that existing schemes which involve the deployment of volunteers at international level made use of the standards developed by the EUAV Initiative[72].

With the EUAV Initiative, the Commission added a volunteering scheme to the existing landscape of schemes which offers equal opportunities and chances for all EU citizens to be involved specifically in humanitarian volunteerism.

EQ 6: Overall conclusion on the achievements of the 5 objectives though implementation of the EUAV actions

All in all, the degree of achievement of the 5 objectives of EUAV is clearly varied. Skill improvement of volunteers (objective 2) and improved capacity building at hosting and sending organisations (objective 3) have been achieved and can be called effective. When looking at the objective to improve the capacity to provide EU humanitarian aid (objective 1) and to communicate humanitarian aid principles (objective 4), major achievements are not yet detectable at EU level. In terms of the coherence and consistency of volunteering in the EU (objective 5) the EUAV initiative shows varied effectiveness: good in terms of standards and a common framework for humanitarian volunteering; not yet effective in involving larger numbers of volunteers from EU13 countries. More detailed information is provided below per objective to support this overall statement:

Objective 1: The evaluation found that the improvement of the capacity of the EU to deliver humanitarian aid by the initiative was restricted, due to the fact that the amount of funding of the initiative (e.g. compared to the overall humanitarian budget of the Union) is limited and the percentage of funding of EUAV spent with direct impact on humanitarian needs is the smaller part of the EUAV budget. However, there are specific actions which aiming at building capacity, and show positive impact confirmed by HOs and SOs (i.e. CB components and TA grants and those volunteering deployments targeting humanitarian impact at community level).

Objective 2: The evaluation revealed that the EUAV Initiative improves the skills and / or competences of the volunteers through its training programme and the deployment of the volunteers. This was confirmed by the vast majority of the implementing stakeholders. Both the volunteers and several of the sending organisations see the deployment of volunteers as a career development programme, in which volunteers can improve their skills, collect field experience and show their competences, all to get ready and prepared for a paid position in the humanitarian sector.

Objective 3: The clear majority of hosting and sending organisations report a positive impact of the CB projects, which are reportedly leading to improved capacity at the level of hosting organisations. The impact on fostering local volunteerism is somewhat limited to a qualitative improvement for international volunteerism, as most hosting organisations already host volunteers from other volunteering schemes. The standards put in place by EUAV lead to a qualitative improvement of the volunteer management within hosting and sending organisations – and successful certification assures the ability of the actors to comply with these standards.

Objective 4: The objective of communication of the Unions´ humanitarian aid principles agreed in the European consensus of humanitarian aid is achieved within the projects co-funded by EUAV, by including the objectives in the training programme of the volunteers and the capacity building

[71] For example *AIDCSO* led by *Alizana* from Spain, creates a community of practice of CSOs involved in volunteerism and humanitarian aid in which at least the 51 organisations will benefit from promotion of standards though the project.

[72] For example German organisations, (Brot für die Welt); American religious groups (Lutheran World Federation); within ActionAid a Danish funded scheme, a French governmental scheme, an Austrian Scheme and in South-east Asia the scheme of the Australian government; UN volunteers scheme.

and technical assistance projects. In deployment projects, the volunteers are expected to contribute to this objective but here the understanding varies and local communication on values and volunteering is not really practiced nor does it follow a consistent concept. Communication is limited to those involved in the projects as specific attention is not yet given to the wider communication of the values through e.g. the EUAV website or platform.

Objective 5: The EUAV Initiative established, as part of its preparatory actions, a set of well perceived and accepted standards for international volunteer management. Until today however, the Initiative has had a limited impact on the consistency of humanitarian volunteering across Member States. EUAV has the potential to strengthen the coherence and consistency of humanitarian volunteering if efforts are intensified to communicate standards and to promote more engagement of EU actors to certify as sending organisations. In addition, it needs to be reiterated, that the objective appears to be very ambitious when looking at the totality of EUAV operational objectives and comparing it to the overall resources available[73].

Recommendations

- *(R4.1)* Information on how the volunteers are contributing to capacity building should be collected and documented. The categories could be **supporting services** (at the level of the hosting organisation), and **training and development services** (mainly providing support to establishing capacities at host organisation level, be it volunteer management / DRR / resilience building, etc.). *(linked to objective 1)*
- *(R4.2)* It is recommended[74] that a pool / roster of available and pre-selected volunteers be established to be able to react quickly to arising needs (e.g. in EUAV funded projects for short term expertise) and assure a more flexible implementation of EUAV funded projects. *(linked to objective 1)*
- *(R4.3)* In order to support the alignment of EUAV activities with the regular humanitarian assistance funded by DG ECHO, it is recommended to also consider (additional) targeted calls dedicated to specific thematic issues in line with the established and proven DG ECHO needs assessment (e.g. DIPECHO actions). *(linked to objective 1)*
- *(R4.5)* It is recommended that the adherence to the standards by the individual EUAV partners be monitored in a more targeted way (e.g. through mid-term verification of the satisfaction with the implementation of the L & D plans at volunteer level) to assure the quality and respect of the standards throughout the Initiative. This monitoring does not need to be extensive but should target the most critical aspects of the volunteer involvement (e.g. L & D plan implementation, safety and security, and quality of mentorship) - *(linked to objective 2 & 5)*

Further issues to be considered

- It would also be helpful for the re-certification process of HOs to build in an assessment component looking at the ways in which capacity has been strengthened since the organisation was first certified. As with the volunteers' experiences "documentation of stories from the field", examples of good practice could be collected and disseminated. *(linked to objective 1)*
- In the majority of cases, hosting organisations are field offices of EU sending organisations. The EUAV objectives clearly include the request to foster local volunteering and this can best be done in a sustainable way by genuine local actors. In this context, it is suggested that the proportion of genuine local organisations and field offices of EU sending organisations

[73] i.e. at average 21 Mio. EURO / year

[74] Please see Annex 4 - Reflection on the establishment of a pool / roster of volunteers for details (please note that this recommendation for its implementation might require a change in the Regulation)

acting as hosting organisations be monitored and documented in the EACEA monitoring report. *(linked to objective 3)*

4.4.2 Performance of the communication strategy implementation

EQ – 7 To what extent has the communication strategy contributed to generating increased public awareness of the Initiative and the EU's role in the field of humanitarian aid?

EUAV Communication is managed by the EUAV implementation team within DG ECHO. Communications on EUAV is guided by the **communication strategy** of the Initiative. This communication strategy includes the following communication objectives:

(1) Raise awareness of the EU Aid Volunteers Initiative inside the EU and in countries where volunteers will be deployed and local actions are supported.
(2) Inform interested communities about the opportunity to engage in the EU Aid Volunteers initiative.
(3) Promote the value of EU solidarity in action and the EU's humanitarian aid principles.
(4) Create a shared identity of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative on the part of volunteers and participating organisations.
(5) Engage with the public to generate support for volunteerism in Europe and worldwide.
(6) Demonstrate the value added and impact of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative and its different actions, and the professional contribution of EU Aid Volunteers, notably to EU citizens, Member States, potential participating organisations and host communities.

Besides the objectives, the strategy contains essential elements guiding the overall communication alongside the EUAV implementation, such as:

- Copy strategy (called Key Communication Message)
- Target groups (called Target Audience)
- External Communication "Actions and Tools"
- Deliverables throughout the initiative by DG ECHO
- Deliverables by partners (specific requirements of all grantees / implementation partners)
- (Communication) Evaluation

Overall, the general strategy is well defined and includes the basic elements that would be expected. However, the entire concept falls short where it gets to alignment (joint and coordinated communication effort with DG ECHO communication and with respect to the performance measurement as defined in the evaluation part of the strategy). Furthermore, no detailed communication and media plans were made available for the reference period of the evaluation.

Findings

- In support of their communication activities, DG ECHO has established a brand (including visual), visibility packages and a copy strategy (key messages) which is straight forward and the content and quality of these elements appear sufficient. These elements contribute to a consistent identity of the EUAV Initiative.
- With support of external service providers and internal support services (e.g. DG Digit) DG ECHO put in place the basic communication media as planned (i.e. website / platform, twitter account, facebook page, linkedin profile, flyer and auxiliary material such as give-aways).
- The website attracts over 300,000 yearly visits which can be considered significant. As no specified monitoring of the website visitors is conducted, no detailed assessment can be made of the kind of visitors and the impact of the visits on the visitors. When looking at the responses of the volunteers to the question of how they first learned about EUAV the website was clearly the most important contact tool for the initial information (about 35%)

followed by other social media sources (about 22 %) and personal recommendations (about 21%).

- Next to the presence of DG ECHO / EACEA, most of the project partners have developed a specific project website or social media presence in support of project specific communication. EACEA keeps an informal list of web presences of their partners and seeks to keep it updated (reported in the 6-monthly monitoring reports under the required number of references in the media).
- The launched EUAV-platform is mainly meant for contact between involved parties, and provides links to all the websites of the implementing partners.
- The specific EUAV (DG ECHO) twitter account is not used but the general DG ECHO account is used to tweet messages about the EUAV Initiative, and in all messages from DG ECHO projects tweets related to EUAV (the hashtag #EUAidVolunteers) is used.
- The Facebook page of DG ECHO is used also for EUAV messages. Several involved project coordinators projects (for example from *GVC Italy* and *La Guilde* from France) are very active, with sharing information on their projects with a focus on stories of deployed volunteers.
- The EUAV team of DG ECHO is involved in promoting the initiative at DG ECHO organised events (like the yearly FPA partner meeting).
- The parties reached by the EUAV Initiative, who became active once aware of it, are mostly organisations which were already active in the field of humanitarian aid, and most of them had an existing relationship with DG ECHO.
- The communication actions conducted by DG ECHO focus, besides raising general awareness, on promoting the Initiative at the level of potential future sending organisations (addressing the need for more active sending organisations to increase the actual number of vacancies). The recent attempts (e.g. road show in several EU member states) did not generate much interest. This more critical statement is not to blame the communication for the limited number of EU partners and therefore vacancies (many of the major humanitarian stakeholders in Europe are more or less aware of the existence of EUAV due to the long preparatory phase and the involvement of many FPA partners). However, the survey asked SOs how they first learned about EUAV and 4 out of 14 respondents indicated DG ECHO communication activities.
- In the monitoring framework the growing number of volunteer applications for the EUAV vacancies is an indicator for successfully increased public awareness. Currently there is an overwhelming demand / interest of young job seekers for vacancies, so there is not really the need to foster communication in this direction[75].

Conclusion

The communication activities led to a significant online presence, which proved to be adequate for the target groups' volunteers and people interested in volunteerism. However, there is no evidence – and no instrument yet in place to measure - that the communication leads to an increased public awareness of the EU's role in humanitarian aid. The initiative foremost focuses its communication on volunteers and volunteerism-oriented citizens and organisations. In terms of newly reached organisations, 4 out of 14 survey respondents stated that they had first learned of EUAV through DG ECHO EUAV communication.

[75] Some SOs indicated that in future they will formulate more specific vacancy notes to target suitable applicants better, and in this context, to receive less applications.

Recommendations

- (R4.6) In order to widen the communication actions as required in the communication strategy of the Initiative, it is strongly advised to professionalise the communication component by introducing a communication specialist into the DG ECHO EUAV team to ensure targeted, impact-oriented communication planning, implementation, and monitoring of the initiative.
- (R4.7) There are no tools in place to measure impact on public awareness of EUAV and EU humanitarian values. It is recommended to consider employing professional media monitoring services and in addition to review the Eurobarometer questions related to humanitarian aid and volunteer involvement and adapt them to the EUAV Initiative (if necessary).
- (R4.8) To unleash more of the potential, at the level of FPA partners becoming SOs, it is recommended to formulate "alignment stories" (e.g. joint, impactful work of regular DG ECHO funded projects with EUAV contributions). These success stories can help to open the minds of critical stakeholders, making them consider engaging in the Initiative.

4.4.3 EUAV reached new organisations and created partnerships

EQ – 8 To what extent has the EU Aid Volunteers initiative reached new organisations that have not previously worked with the Commission, and promoted new partnerships between organisations?

The EUAV calls for proposals in 2015 required a minimum of 3 partners from EU countries and partners from 3 non-EU countries. Based on the experience of those calls, the EUAV team decided to reduce the number of (transnational) partners to two from EU countries and two partners from non-EU countries in 2016 for deployment projects and in 2017 2+2 also for capacity building projects.

Most partnerships existed before the EUAV engagement - Analysis of the partnerships shows that the partnerships established consist mainly of organisations that had worked together before. Many of them were part of the same international federation/platform of organisations (e.g. ACTED) or were country representations of INGOs (e.g. ActionAid, GVC, Concern, etc.), all of them regularly working with EU funds. The responses to the survey support this analysis, the majority state that they knew their partners before and 82 % of responding EU actors confirmed to have had dealings with EU funded assistance before.

New partnerships created between humanitarian actors and classical volunteer sending actors - New partnerships were mostly created between humanitarian actors and volunteer sending organisations that had no major previous experience in humanitarian assistance. Organisations working in the field of international voluntarism knew each other from international meetings and platforms and other collaborations but were not used to working together in consortia (e.g. *La Guilde* and *Comhlamh*).

The majority of the EU-based organisations are FPA partners or have been involved in DG ECHO-funded projects before. Most of them in the field of humanitarian aid, several in the EU Aid Volunteers pilots (i.e. *la Guilde*), and one of them in the field of the EU civil protection mechanism (e.g. BE DRIN projects with partners who already had worked together in IPA civil protection projects). The non-EU based organisations are mainly organisations that have been involved in the implementation of EU funded projects in collaboration with their existing EU partners (most of them field offices of EU sending organisations, altogether 78 out of 108 certified hosting organisations or 72%).

Existing partnerships considered as the right decision when working with a new scheme - Most of the organisations involved stated in the interviews that they deliberately chose to use their

own, known partners to set up a consortium due to the fact that it is easier to work with already known partners. As the size of the projects is relatively small, new partnerships would create an additional burden and challenge as well as new risks. Simply working with a new funding mechanism (EUAV Initiative) with unknown procedures and institutional behaviour was considered a real challenge by the applicants.

Successful involvement of EU13 organisations in TA and new third country partners in CB - Specific attention was given in the calls to involve partners from the EU13 (countries that became a member of the EU in 2004 or later) as they are also less present as framework partners of DG ECHO.

In the capacity building projects, 9 partners from those countries were involved (at least one partner in 6 of the 8 projects) and in the Technical Assistance projects 15 EU13 partners were involved (in 5 of the 7 projects at least one such partner was involved). Of note are projects led by Polish Humanitarian Aid (the only consortium leader from an EU13 country so far) with only EU13 participants, and a project from *GVC Italy* with 6 EU13 partners.

The Czech Republic is the only EU13 country so far with two certified sending organisations: *People in Need* who are also an FPA partner of DG ECHO, and the *Diakonie CCE* which is a partner of the Act Alliance.

Working together in consortia is not a major challenge - There were no major partnership or consortium issues reported by SOs or HOs. One large DG ECHO FPA partner reported that they had reviewed the EUAV consortium requirements and that was one reason for them not applying. Two other agencies reported that they would have found it simpler to operate alone, as they are used to doing, rather than to add layers of complexity, costs and reporting efforts required when working in a consortium.

Conclusion

The majority of the partnerships active under EUAV funding have been existing partnerships of partners already familiar with each other through other funding schemes or international networks. However for some of them, working as a partner in a consortium, was new.

The specific attention given to organisations from the EU13 member states was successful in the context of the technical assistance and capacity building projects. However it did not yet lead to a larger involvement in the deployment of volunteers.

Although there is doubt as to whether the consortium model is the optimal (most efficient) way of running projects, the evaluators feel that for DG ECHO and the Regulations, the pan-European nature of EUAV takes precedence over simplicity – and therefore no change is recommended.

4.4.4 Awareness campaign about funding opportunities translated into more response on calls

EQ – 9 To what extent have efforts to increase awareness of funding opportunities under this new Initiative translated into more organisations becoming ready to respond to calls for deployment of volunteers?

In 2015 and 2016, the responses to the calls were clearly below expectations as in both years the allocated amount of funding was not completely used.

Since the beginning, DG ECHO/EACEA staff has actively promoted EUAV to attract organisations to take part in the Initiative. Besides the general dissemination of information, framework partners of DG ECHO and consortia partners in the pilot projects of 2013 and 2014 were actively approached and informed about the Initiative and the funding opportunities. The main activities to increase the awareness started in 2016, including an information meeting with potential applicants in Brussels.

Analysing the amount of European organisations having applied for certification in the years 2015-2017 (see chapter 3.5 for figures), there is no clear indication of increased rates of application.

The response to the calls for proposals in 2017 shows an increased response to the capacity building and technical assistance co-funding. Although the number of applications in response to the deployment calls increased from 4 in 2016 to 6 in 2017, for the third year in a row, the budget allocated for the deployment will be under spent.

In order to better understand the reasons for not participating in EUAV, the evaluation team interviewed several organisations who were involved in the pilot projects and DG ECHO FPA partners who are working with volunteers but did not yet apply for certification and/or funding. The reasons for not participating are quite varied. The reasons most often indicated are the following:

- The principle held by some organisations to only involve their "own" volunteers and not volunteers who would need to be selected through a system external to the organisation, such as the EUAV system;
- An assessment that the overheads permitted by the Initiative would not be sufficient to run a (deployment) project in a way that covers the sending organisation's costs sufficiently;
- The fact that EUAV does not permit volunteer deployments to humanitarian (emergency) response operations which is the core business of many DG ECHO FPA partners (and that deploying volunteers at short notice is not possible under EUAV);
- A reservation about focusing on processes centred on international volunteering rather than humanitarian impact - linked to reservations about cost-effectiveness where it relates to needs-based assistance and the impact created;
- The ceiling of funding available for an application is considered by some organisations to be too low to be worth applying for, especially when taking the requirements for certification and partnerships (i.e. consortium building) into account.

Conclusion

The actual (general) level of information about EUAV should be quite high amongst the key humanitarian actors (FPA partner, FAFA partner, International Organisations) as they were already engaged in the context of the extensive preparatory steps (studies, pilot projects, evaluation, public consultations, etc.).

The dissemination of information on the evolution of EUAV, best practices, alignment stories, and explanatory information about opportunities might still need to be intensified to support the development of a positive image, impact and interest (e.g. even certified SOs interviewed during the evaluation sometimes do not completely understand the initiative and the potential opportunities for the organisation).

Awareness and information is important but certainly will not overcome the envisaged challenges. The solution of more intensive engagement is rather at the level of alignment and addressing the needs / expectations of the key humanitarian actors / potential EUAV partners.

Recommendation

- *(R4.9)* It is recommended to develop a concept for the continuous and targeted dissemination of success stories / good practices, particularly by email newsletter, together with more general information on calls for proposals and further explanatory information to stimulate interest from new organisations and keep engaged actors informed and involved.

4.4.5 Usefulness of EUAV platform for the recruitment process

EQ – 10 To what extent has the EU Aid Volunteers Platform been useful for the organisation of the recruitment process and the subsequent project management?

The first part of the EUAV platform was available in 2016 for the announcement of vacancies. After a phased establishment of functionalities it is now fully functional since Spring 2017.

The EUAV platform is a web-based service portal with external (public) and internal (private) services. It offers a variety of functionalities targeted to support the smooth implementation of the EUAV Initiative, particularly addressed to implementing partners and volunteers. Interviews and the surveys showed that the overall appreciation of the platform services is low with both groups. When analysing the reason for this low rating, the main reasons are the only recently full availability of the platform, the lack of familiarity with the platform's functionalities and the missing introduction to the platform.

Full featured platform presented at the 2017 training event - At the EUAV training event in Lunteren in June 2017, the full functionalities of the platform were explained to the volunteers for the first time. The volunteers deployed before did not get a briefing on the platform as it was not fully available at the time[76]. The evaluation observed during the field mission that the Learning and Development Plans (if available) were paper based and often not properly developed – with the excuse given that the platform services were not yet operational. In the case of the L&D plans this is quite unfortunate, as the evaluation found that this aspect was often overlooked and would strongly recommend including the check on existence and adequacy of the L&D plans in the monitoring.

The publication of vacancies and the application of candidates has been in place since 2016 and its use is mandatory for all organisations involved.

Some sending organisations perceive the mandatory use of the platform as double work - Different views emerged on the effectiveness of the EU Aid volunteers platform, as all sending organisations involved have their own procedures for both recruitment and for Learning and Development. Having to use the EUAV platform was perceived as an additional workload for the organisations, and a disincentive for busy managers having to operate two performance management systems. The evaluation however supports the current implementation of a centralised platform, as it provides the opportunity to monitor recruitment, candidate volunteer profiles, and volunteer management (e.g. learning and development plans), and in addition assures broader publicity of vacancies (profiting from the high reputation of ec.europa.eu at search engine level).

Rigid system for vacancy publications - Some organisations also see substantial added-value in the platform feature for vacancy placements – however in many cases it resulted in large numbers of replies to only some of the vacancies. Required by the Regulation, the published vacancies have to stay open for 1 month. Specifically vacancies with a general profile received huge numbers of responses within a few days but with some senior volunteer vacancies, the publication on the portal did not result in sufficiently qualified responses to enable successful recruitment.

Higher degree of acceptance expected for projects about to start from 2017 calls - Sending and hosting organisations and volunteers of 2015 and 2016 projects see a limited added-value in the platform created due to a lack of content and of some functionality. One of the main reasons is that the current projects started before the launch of most of the functionalities of the platform and the organisations and volunteers were not familiar with the system right from the beginning. This will certainly change with those projects about to start after the 2017 call, as introductions and training takes place, and the mandatory functions have been launched.

[76] The EUAV Platform was developed step by step according to priorities. The first functionality was the vacancy publication option followed successively by the other functions.

Conclusion

The platform is certainly an important tool for all implementing stakeholders including implementing partners, volunteers and DG ECHO / EACEA. The set-up of the full version with all its features has seen some delays and was only recently launched.

Better promotion, information and introduction are needed to further increase the acceptance. In this respect DG ECHO plans to provide an information session at the central training events for the volunteers and will assure a good introduction to the involved organisations.

For DG ECHO and EACEA the platform provides important, centralised information which is to be used for monitoring (particularly the volunteer profiles of selected volunteers, L&D plans, and vacancies).

Issues to be considered

A targeted and brief **permanent user survey function** could be included in the platform in order to guide continued improvement based on client feedback. Furthermore, a very short client survey should capture opinions and suggestions for improvement at user level (implementation partners, volunteers) on an annual basis.

As DG ECHO / EACEA does not retain any information on the profiles of applicants for vacancies (and this is important information in order to know more about the group of interested people), it is suggested **to expand carefully the required mandatory information on the platform**, or alternatively to require a status report on the population variables of the applicants from SOs.

4.4.6 Priority level of safety and security procedures for volunteers

EQ – 11 To what extent were the safety procedures and security of volunteers a priority issue for the overall Initiative and in each project? What lessons can be learnt for security standards and duty of care for EU Aid Volunteers?

Throughout the entire establishment process of EUAV, concerns were raised by professional humanitarian actors, sector associations and the Member States related to the risks involved when involving (young) volunteers in humanitarian actions. Therefore, the issue of safety and security of volunteers has been a priority to those involved in the establishment process. Chapter 7 of the EUAV Implementing Regulation[77] "Procedures to ensure duty of care, safety and security" reflects the requirements with respect to these issues. Many provisions have been made including limitations in terms of activities (no emergency response activities), a list of eligible countries which is regularly up-dated (no high risk areas), and mandatory components in the centralised training.

Intense reviews and the field missions revealed that duty of care, safety and security of volunteers is taken very seriously - The evaluation, after having studied the reference documents and reviewed the training exercise, visited a number of countries and situations where volunteers are in place and exchanged with sending and hosting organisations. The conclusion is that the EUAV Initiative takes safety and security issues and duty of care very seriously, not only based on procedures and mandatory requirements but also in the actual deployment situations.

All interviewed organisations and volunteers appreciated the way the safety and security of volunteers is arranged within the Initiative (i) by the standards on safety and security which are a mandatory component required to achieve certification of sending and hosting organisations and (ii) by the training of volunteers prior to deployment. In all the deployment projects, safety and security received ample attention as far as could be observed by the evaluators.

[77] European Commission, "Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1244/2014", 2014

Centralised training include emergency scenarios was highly appreciated by participants - The training on safety and security during the EUAV training was, as stated during interviews, very much appreciated by the volunteers, but in the interviews, respondents (volunteers and organisations) sometimes questioned the usefulness of some of the elements with respect to the actual situation in which the volunteers were about to be deployed (e.g. hostage scenario). As the Initiative makes it impossible to send people to more insecure environments, most volunteers are stationed in a stable, relatively safe environment with good medical facilities. This makes a course including situations of hostage-taking overdone, in the view of the involved organisations (verbatim of a volunteer: "maybe the course was overdone for my actual deployment but having done this course is for sure useful for my future work"). In addition, some sending organisations and volunteers questioned the military involvement in the 2016 training course as they think it unwise that humanitarian volunteers are deployed having had training from military.

Some challenges caused by rigid requirements related to the list of eligible countries – with the practical application of the safety and security procedures having several implications on project implementation. The list of eligible countries for the deployment of volunteers raised questions from implementation partners. They don't fully understand the compilation of the list considering their own evaluation and experience in the field. The discontinuation of deployments to Bangladesh for example, while still allowing deployments to DRC, was questioned, and one SO can only send volunteers to two of the countries where they run humanitarian operations. Several sending organisations would like to see a more flexible approach, to make deployments possible to safer parts of a country instead of not allowing deployments to the whole country (e.g. in the Philippines this would be helpful and understandable). DG ECHO acknowledges this and already made deployments possible to some countries stating that it is only possible in safe areas within the countries. The volunteers deployed to Haiti indicated that it was strange to see that volunteers sent by different organisations had to comply with different safety and security requirements while they were working in the same environment.

Conclusion

Overall, safety and security is taken seriously by the EUAV Initiative, and this includes all implementing stakeholders. This can only be applauded and can be seen as good practice.

The focus on safety and security however sometimes has a significant impact on the ability to deploy volunteers and in some cases this leads to implementation problems (e.g. change of list of eligible countries led to the impossibility to deploy volunteers to Bangladesh, while this was part of a granted project).

Issue to be considered

- Both a continuous review of the listing of the eligible countries and the adoption of a more "regions-based" approach (as in several eligible countries there are unsafe regions while in several ineligible countries there are safe regions) are advisable. This exercise could involve a dialogue between the implementation partner and the unit responsible for security in DG ECHO.

4.4.7 Impact of the trans-European partnership requirements in the calls

EQ – 12 To what extent have trans-European partnerships, as required by the Calls for Proposals, contributed to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Initiative?

The first calls for proposal required at least 3 partners from three different European Countries.[78] In addition to this requirement, the first deployment calls and calls for capacity building require three

[78] In the new calls for proposals for deployment as of 2016 and for the TA / CB calls as from 2017, based on feedback received from implementing partners, DG ECHO reduced the requirement to 2 European partners.

partners from three non-European countries - later calls required only 2 EU partners and 2 non-EU partners.

The calls achieved the goal of establishing European partnerships, as 74 organisations from 24 of the 28 EU Member states have been involved in the projects as partners.[79]

Based on the survey results, the organisations are positive about the value of the European partnerships;

- 100% of the SOs agreed with the statement:
  'Particularly through its European dimension (transnational partnerships, technical assistance for EU actors, etc.) EUAV helps to create visibility for EU humanitarian actions and EU values inside and outside the EU'.
- 82% of the HOs agreed with the statement:
  'Our participation in the initiative has provided us with new contacts, partners, operational insights and enhanced knowledge exchange (due to the consortium / transnational partner requirement)'.
- 80% were satisfied with:
  Trans-national partnership requirement of the EUAV Initiative for deployment.

In both the survey comments and during interviews, the exchange of information and mutual learning, especially in the technical assistance projects were seen as very useful. However, in the interviews the evaluators received more critical responses on the effectiveness and efficiency of the transnational partnerships.

The initial maximum funding amount of the projects (limited to 700,000 EURO EU co-financing) with a requirement for at least 3 European and 3 non-European countries, combined with the limitation of the staff costs in the deployment projects, resulted in a heavy management and coordination workload.

SOs' informed DG ECHO about this situation, which finally resulted in adaptations raising the limits of the co-financing for deployment projects to 1,400,000 EURO, reducing the number of partners to 2 SO + 2 HO, and raising the permitted staff costs of a deployment project to 30% in the calls for 2017.

During the field missions it was apparent that the partnerships were not really relevant to deployment projects: the HOs and volunteers were dealing exclusively with their specific SO partner in the consortium.

Conclusion

While the transnational partnerships have certainly helped in fulfilling one of the EUAV objectives (i.e. enhancing coherence and consistency of volunteering across Member States in order to improve opportunities for Union citizens to participate in humanitarian aid activities and operations), there is not yet any evidence of a tangible contribution of the trans-European partnerships to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Initiative.

4.4.8 Overall conclusion on effectiveness

While considering the limitations and challenges of the evaluation (e.g. no EUAV project finalised during the evaluation period), the evaluation can conclude on the overall effectiveness of the EUAV Initiative as follows:

- DG ECHO, together with the Executive Agency EACEA has successfully set up an implementation framework in line with the requirements of the EUAV Regulations (including all related processes). Decisions to outsource major parts of the implementation

[79] Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Luxemburg are not represented

tasks to an Executive Agency, experienced with implementing EC grant schemes, can be seen as effective (particularly when considering the complications / complexity caused by the Regulations´ requirements).

- EUAV was effective in giving high priority to the safety and security of volunteers, as volunteers´ security and safety requirements are enshrined in the Regulation and the evaluation observed compliance with requirements during field missions and interviews.
- The EUAV communication strategy is comprehensive and includes all elements to enable effective communication. However, the actions carried out to stimulate more EU actors' engagement showed mediocre success. In the future, a more pro-active, marketing oriented approach (strong client orientation to provide and to communicate added value of EUAV) should help to become more effective in this area.
- The evaluation found that the extent of the achievement of the five operational objectives was varied. The impact of improving the capacity of the Union to provide humanitarian aid is quite limited due to the size of funding and the priority on processes rather than on impact (in the longer term however the Initiative might prove pivotal to strengthened international and local volunteering in humanitarian assistance). The Initiative certainly managed to improve the skills and competences of the volunteers – confirmed by all stakeholders and the volunteers themselves. Related to Capacity Building, a clear majority of the stakeholders report that positive and impactful projects have improved local capacities in a tangible way. The impact on the awareness of EU humanitarian principles at EU citizens' level cannot be measured at present – however, the information and communication in the sphere of the EUAV Initiative is clear and effective. Established (European) standards for volunteer management in the humanitarian context are a good start to foster consistency of volunteering across Member States, but it is yet not clear what impact will be achieved by the efforts (transnational partnerships and the involvement of organisations of the EU13 show some effectiveness).
- The Initiative proved ineffective in as far as it relates to attracting sufficient organisations to apply for deployment funds. Three years in a row significant amounts of the allocated budget for the deployment of volunteers were not used (with a very small increase in vacancies from 2016 to 2017 despite all efforts to increase participation). This is particularly problematic as the involvement of volunteers in humanitarian assistance is at the core of the EUAV Initiative (and all budget invested in CB / TA is mostly used in preparation of future deployments). Furthermore, there is no competition on funds for deployment which is an unfortunate situation (i.e. risk for opportunity driven actions).

All in all, the Initiative shows a varied effectiveness depending on the component of the Initiative and the perspective. Those components related to processes and administration show good effectiveness (implementation framework, processes and procedures, contract management, technical and procedural information to stakeholders, training of volunteers and skill development and the like). Where it relates to "outreach" components such as external communication of the Union´s humanitarian principles or the enhancement of coherence and consistency of volunteering across Member States, the Initiative shows limited effectiveness to date. With respect to deployment figures, the Initiative definitely remained under its targets and expectations and in this particular (core) aspect of EUAV did not prove effective during the first half of its first implementation cycle.

4.5 Efficiency

4.5.1 Impact of the content and structure of the reference documents on the implementation

EQ – 13 To what extent has the contents and structure of the set of reference documents put in place for the Initiative been appropriate for ensuring and facilitating a smooth implementation?

Throughout the establishment phase of the EUAV Initiative, the particular challenges (including risk to volunteers) caused by involving volunteers in humanitarian actions has driven and influenced the establishment process, and stimulated DG ECHO to undertake every possible step to mitigate risks and to respond to the concerns of the different stakeholders.

Recognising these concerns, DG ECHO took a sequenced approach to establishing the Initiative including an extensive pilot phase with 12 different projects which have tested various approaches on how to involve volunteers in humanitarian actions in a meaningful and safe way. Furthermore, in support of preparing the launch of the EUAV Initiative, DG ECHO commissioned three studies to establish a set of basic requirements and standards for EUAV (focused on the volunteer management, support services and implementing approaches) in 2013[80]. These studies, the results of the pilot phase and the formal impact assessment on EUAV, informed the design of the legal framework of the EUAV Initiative which defines the principles, standards and procedures for its implementation. The legal framework is composed of the following legal documents:

Table 13: Legal framework of the EUAV Initiatives (overview)

Regulations	Objective	Main content headings / Chapters
Regulation **(EU) No 375/2014** of 3rd of April 2014 establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps ("EU Aid Volunteers initiative")	**Establishment of the EU Aid Volunteer initiative**	1. Introductory provisions (incl. principles and objectives) 2. Actions under the EU Aid Volunteers Initiative 3. Programming and allocation of funds 4. Cooperation with other countries 5. Delegations of power and implementing provisions 6. Monitoring and evaluation 7. Final provisions Annex: Operational objectives, thematic priorities and percentages for allocation of the financial envelope for implementation of the regulation
Delegated Regulation **(EU) No 1398/2014** of 24 October 2014 laying down standards regarding candidate volunteers and the EUA aid Volunteers	**Definition of standards** related to volunteers management and the Initiative as such	1. General provisions 2. Competence framework 3. Recognition of the skills and competences acquired by EU Aid volunteers 4. Standards governing the partnerships between sending and hosting organisations 5. Equal opportunities and non-discrimination 6. Compliance with national and Union law and law of the hosting country 7. Final provisions Annex: Competence Framework
Implementing Regulation **(EU) No 1244/2014** of 20 November 2014 laying down the rules for the implementation of	**Definition of implementing rules** of the regulation establishing EUAV	1. General provisions 2. Procedures for the identification and selection of candidate volunteers 3. Training programme of the EU Aid Volunteer Initiative 4. Procedures for the pre-deployment preparation of candidate volunteers (incl. apprenticeship placements) 5. Procedures for the deployment and management of EU Aid Volunteers

[80] "The 2013 Preparatory action for the EU Aid Volunteers" (ref. 2014/S012-016081), covering three dedicated fields in three separate services contracts: (1) Training of humanitarian volunteers and capacity building in the humanitarian sector; (2) Volunteer management standards and certification; and (3) Employee volunteering.

Regulations	Objective	Main content headings / Chapters
the regulation (EU) No 375/2014		6. Provisions for insurance and living conditions 7. Procedures to ensure duty of care, safety and security 8. Procedures for monitoring and assessing the individual performance of EU Aid Volunteers 9. Certification mechanism for sending and hosting organisations 10. Final provisions Annex 1 Requirements Volunteer Management (check-list summary) Annex 2 Training curriculum Annex 3 Self-assessment and references (sending and hosting organisations)

As can be seen, the legal framework is rather complex and in its Delegated Regulation and the Implementing Regulation, very detailed and directive. While there are good reasons for a well thought through framework when dealing with volunteers, the resulting complexity provides further challenges to implementing stakeholders.

Standards and reference framework – An essential enabling factor for EUAV

The intense preparatory work on the development of principles, standards and strict procedures for the EUAV Initiative enabled the European Commission to establish the Initiative in a responsible and risk mitigating way. Some observed impacts of the preparatory works / reference documents are listed below:

- The work on the training curriculum builds the foundation of the established training scheme, and is highly appreciated by volunteers, sending organisations and hosting organization. This was confirmed unanimously during interviews with volunteers and organisations involved.
- The volunteer management requirements provide a consistent and coherent basis for the management of volunteers in humanitarian sectors (which was not available before EUAV). The usefulness to having it and its actual concept and content is widely accepted by the sending and hosting organisations interviewed during the evaluation (the actual compliance with the mandatory requirements in the project context varies however, as the field mission of the evaluation revealed).
- Standards for governing the partnerships between sending and hosting organisations provide safeguards for the partnerships between the co-funded actors, and in particular ensure that the principle of equality is clear in these relations. The evaluation did not detect non-compliance with these standards during HQ visits and field missions.
- The requirement of a formal certification process for hosting and sending organisations is an important factor to mitigate risks caused by the involvement of volunteers in humanitarian actions and to ensure that only qualified organisations are entrusted with sending and hosting EUAV volunteers. However, this process was cited by many organisations as complicated and cumbersome (more so by humanitarian actors with less experience in volunteer management than by traditional volunteer sending organisations). However when asked if the certification process is needed and helpful for the organisations, the majority confirmed the importance of the process to ensure responsible involvement of volunteers.
- DG ECHO and EACEA recognised that the initiative appears quite complex to applicants and developed comprehensive to the point guidance documents[81] for applicants to both deployment and technical assistance / capacity building calls. The guidance documents are useful, necessary and brief enough to add value (e.g. limited to 15 pages). These documents are certainly helping new organisations as well as successful applicants to understand and to adhere to requirements.

[81] Guidance documents: " EUAV Project Handbook - Technical Assistance and Capacity Building" and "EUAV Project Handbook – Deployment" , Selection 2016

Challenges caused by complexity

Some challenges, related to established standards and procedural requirements, were conveyed by the different implementation stakeholders. These include:

- The executive agency, experienced in managing volunteering programmes (e.g. EVS centralised actions), calls the requirements resulting from standards and reference documents the most complex ever seen, and reports on major difficulties in setting up the administrative procedures (particularly IT requirements such as the complex e-forms).
- DG ECHO for example struggled with the challenges of setting up supporting services such as the web-platform with its required functionalities and also the online volunteering options (which was only launched recently).
- Grant applicants are faced with "new and unknown" procedures resulting in multiple challenges such as the e-forms (reportedly very difficult to access / demanding a lot of bandwidth), a certification process which was reported to be very cumbersome for many of the organisations (e.g. in the survey 5 of 15 SOs call for simplifications but at the same time always more than 60% of the SOs and HOs indicated that they could handle the procedure), and a requirement for transnational partnerships which are a further challenge to efficient project development and implementation.

The evaluation observed that DG ECHO together with the Executive Agency EACEA cultivated a practical and proactive approach to overcome many of the challenges of the establishment process, partly caused by the complexity of requirements as developed and defined in the legal documents.

This "learning by doing" approach involved an intense dialogue with several engaged European partners (sending organisations) and led to "in process" adaptations and simplifications such as the reduction of the minimum number of EU partners required to request co-funding, increase of eligible expenses for volunteer management costs (staff costs). Such flexibility is a credit to both EACEA and DG ECHO.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges caused by the established principles, standards and requirements, the evaluation clearly reveals that these are well justified and essential for the responsible and risk-mitigating involvement of volunteers in humanitarian actions and therefore for the establishment of the EUAV Initiative as a whole.

In order to mitigate the impact of the complexity on the efficiency of implementation, DG ECHO together with EACEA continuously seek to simplify processes (those possible within the Regulation). This approach is adequate and fully justified if looking at the feedback of hosting and sending organisations (e.g. in the responses to the surveys, the majority request simplifications).

Compared to the "regular" humanitarian funding of DG ECHO, the EUAV Initiative´s requirements add complexity and implementation risks to humanitarian action and make the engagement less attractive if the focus is put on comparative implementation efficiency and impact (i.e. volunteers might resign to take on a paid job, the status of the country of operation can change, investments in compliance with volunteer management requirements).

Recommendations

- *(R5.1)* It is recommended that the e-form accessibility be improved (quicker and less cumbersome access) by changing / amending the used system.
- *(R5.2)* It is advisable to foster the learning and improvement / simplification process (e.g. bi-annual focus group aimed at process simplification and "customer care") with the objective of continuously improving efficiency and doing this by involving implementing stakeholders and potential certification applicants, building on the established EUAV network component.

- *(R5.3)* The process of learning and improvement should be informed by, but not limited to, mandatory external ex-post evaluations of EUAV funded activities. The lessons learned from these evaluations should be captured in a knowledge base and published.

Further issues to be considered

- Consider the option (simplification) to also allow regular DG ECHO funded projects to contain dedicated EUAV components with for example only one partner having the need for certification[82]. This approach is likely to stimulate acceptance and credibility of EUAV as one resource in humanitarian aid (with eligible activities in line with the relevant EUAV Regulation). Possible beneficiaries of, for example, EUAV institutional capacity building could be local partners (e.g. NGOs) of DG ECHO partners in secure countries / locations (the Local NGO study of DG ECHO in 2013 revealed a substantial need for support at local partner level in various fields)[83].

4.5.2 Monitoring Framework

EQ – 14 To what extent was the monitoring framework (including the relevant provisions of the Regulation) applied by the Commission and the Executive Agency efficient, and satisfying the monitoring needs?

The Executive Agency EACEA is in charge of the monitoring of the EUAV Initiative (delegated task[84]). This monitoring is based on a monitoring framework which was developed in the context of the EUAV pilot project evaluation[85]. As required in the Better Regulation Guidelines of the Commission[86], these frameworks are to be based on the intervention logic of the Initiative. As a result, the specific monitoring framework of EUAV reflects the complexity of the Initiative, particularly in the formulation of outcome and output indicators, which are, although well justified, extensive.

EUAV Monitoring framework

The basic parameters of the established EUAV monitoring framework are the following:

- The monitoring and reporting tasks are delegated to the Executive Agency based on a well-defined monitoring framework.
- The monitoring reporting frequency is 6 monthly and the reports are provided to DG ECHO.
- An annual report is provided every 12 months.
- Individual project monitoring reports[87] are prepared by the assigned EACEA project officer (limited to output level). Expert monitoring of e.g. Capacity Building components such as DRR, is not yet included in the monitoring activities.
- Data collection process is not yet automated, but done manually from numerous sources (a cumbersome and time consuming process).

[82] This might need a change in the Regulation.
[83] European Commission, "Evaluation of the potential effectiveness and efficiency gains of working directly with local NGOs in the humanitarian interventions of the Commission", 2013
[84] European Commission, Working Arrangement DG ECHO and EACEA on the regular monitoring and reporting on the EUAV Initiative, ARES(2015)4055718, 2015
[85] IFC, "Evaluation of the Pilot Actions of the EU Aid Volunteers – Final Report", July 2014
[86] European Commission, "Better Regulation Guidelines – COM(2015-215 final", May 2015
[87] The project monitoring by EACEA is composed of: continued desk monitoring and a 3 monthly direct contact (e.g. by phone) , an online briefing at the beginning of the project, optional visits to the organisations' premises, optional attendance during project events and through meetings (presence or online) organized by EACEA (as defined in the Project Handbooks for applicants).

Summary findings

- The basic design of the monitoring framework is state of the art, formulated in line with the intervention logic of the initiative, providing indicators with baseline information and targets at output and outcome level. Some tools are under development or not yet used (e.g. stakeholder surveys, e-final report). Therefore, the evaluation cannot categorically comment on the actual quality of the application of the monitoring framework.
- The outcome monitoring, documenting the aggregated outcomes of the co-funded projects, has not yet taken place, as the first projects are to be completed in August / September 2017 and to date only two draft final reports have been submitted[88] to EACEA.
- A recent institutional performance evaluation[89] described the monitoring and evaluation framework as an example of good organisational practice: *"The monitoring framework for the EU Aid Volunteers programme, which described the intervention logic and the data collection process in order to measure programme indicators during the implementation process, developed by DG ECHO in cooperation with the Agency could be highlighted as an example of good practice for other parent DGs."*
- After investment in staff development time, EACEA has reduced the time required to comply with the requirements of the monitoring and evaluation framework by introducing a degree of automation.
- The monitoring does not explicitly capture the number of provided / co-funded volunteering months by junior and senior experts. This figure is at least as important as the total number of volunteers deployed, as it provides the possibility to measure person months dedicated to a specific output and to calculating the average costs for a volunteer month under EUAV (providing a benchmark figure to compare with other similar initiatives).
- Data collection in support of the monitoring is still not automated and the collection of data is a very time and resource consuming effort (due to scattered sources of data). The Executive Agency responded to these challenges by involving an IT professional, who currently sets up the process for a more automatic gathering of information for the reports from e-application, and in future will do the same from the e-final reports.
- Based on the provided figures and information of the monitoring reports, DG ECHO was able to compile the annual report of the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - reportedly with no major problems (aside from the still unautomated data collection).
- The indicators as defined in the monitoring framework can basically be called "RACER" (Relevant, Accepted, Credible, Easy and Robust) as required by Better Regulation Guidelines of the Commission. The few which do not comply with these requirements should be replaced and/or adapted (as an example, it is recommended to delete the following indicator: "Average cost per person reached by humanitarian aid projects to which the EUAV initiative contributes").
- The EUAV team within DG ECHO, although in regular contact with the EACEA staff, indicated the need for better and timelier information on project implementation. The frequency of the key performance data monitoring reporting (6 monthly) is thought to be too long to maintain. Today this challenge is addressed by making available to DG ECHO staff project monitoring fiches for all open EUAV projects which record major project activities on a 3-4 monthly basis.
- The monitoring of the EUAV co-funded actions is done by the staff of EACEA (assigned project manager) and consists of collecting information on outputs. There is no technical /

[88] Status 15th September 2017
[89] European Commission, PPMI Final Report " 3rd Interim Evaluation of the EACEA", 2016

experts monitoring (e.g. no link with experts in DG ECHO field offices who could report on implementation quality).

No professional media monitoring is undertaken or commissioned (e.g. through an external service provider able to document publications around EUAV at European level), however one staff member of EACEA monitors the platforms of the EUAV partners (mapping of platforms and social media presentations)[90]. This information is useful to see whether or not contractual communication obligations are regarded but does not allow for more detailed analysis.

Conclusion

The established monitoring framework is designed in line with the intervention logic of the initiative and its concept in general complies with the Better Regulation Guidelines of the Commission (the concept as well as the majority of the output and outcome indicators).

The overall complexity of the EUAV Initiative (e-forms / multiple stakeholders / certification requirements / multi-level objectives) leads to a complex monitoring framework. The data collection is challenging for the Executive Agency since the systems in place cannot (fully) automatically collect and provide the required information / data.

Despite these challenges, the Executive Agency was in the position to deliver relevant monitoring data and reports informing the annual report of the Commission to the Council and the Parliament. Some adjustments and modifications are necessary and recommended, but overall, the monitoring framework concept and structure complies with requirements and satisfies monitoring needs.

Recommendations

- *(R5.4)* It is recommended to involve DG ECHO field experts in the technical / expert monitoring of the EUAV projects (in third countries). This would extend the monitoring from counting outputs to a more advanced expert monitoring which would allow targeted and evidence-based corrective measures if needed (in projects where direct community impact is targeted such as with DRR support measures). Furthermore, the related exchange between DG ECHO field offices and the EUAV Initiative is likely to improve the information flow and relationships, and finally the alignment of EUAV with the regular humanitarian assistance provided in a country or region.

Issues to be considered

- EACEA to provide real-time interface to access management information data to DG ECHO after having automated the data collection in order to satisfy the DG ECHO EUAV team information requirements.
- Review the monitoring indicators and remove those which are not “RACER” (relevant, accepted, credible, easy and robust).
- Consider coordinating enlarged media monitoring with DG ECHO communications and to include EUAV in the DG ECHO media monitoring plan / contract (in case there is one).

[90] Information based on 3 months monitoring reports of the EUAV partners which include evidence of the latest project related communication activities (including links showing evidence of published information on social media / the internet)

4.5.3 Processes of the Commission / EACEA – Impact on cost-effectiveness and implementation

EQ – 15: To what extent did the processes put in place by the Commission and EACEA ensure cost-effectiveness and a smooth implementation of the Initiative, whilst conforming to the requirements of the reference documents for the operation of the Initiative?

The evaluation question related to cost-effectiveness focusses on the efficiency of the implementation procedures and processes put in place by the Commission. The assessment of the cost-effectiveness at project level per output is not required as a subject of the evaluation.

The evaluation team however considers it important to also compare overall costs (e.g. cost per volunteering month, training costs per capita, etc.) to enable statements on some core aspects related to the comparative cost-effectiveness of the Initiative.

The overall cost structure of EUAV is defined and determined by the following key factors:

- Definition of the Regulation on percentages for the allocation of the financial envelope foreseen for the implementation (EU No 375/2014, Annex 1)
- Decision to delegate the majority of the implementation tasks to an Executive Agency (currently 7 average full-time staff members and roughly 1 m EURO annual budget)
- DG ECHO staff involved in the implementation "the EUAV team in DG ECHO" (currently 3 full time staff members)
- Costs of supporting services (e.g. training, insurance, media development and communication to name the most important), which are required by the standards and reference documents.
- Proposals of grant applicants in response to the calls by thematic priority (here some ceilings for eligible costs are defined and fixed, such as the ceiling of max. 30% of the total budget for deployments to be used for staff costs of the applicant / its partners).

When looking at the above listing, there are fixed costs and variable cost elements. The fixed cost elements are basically limited to staff costs in the Commission and in the Executive Agency. All other cost positions are mostly variable costs which only occur related to activities / performance of the EUAV Initiative.

4.5.3.1 Processes and procedures

Related to the key factors determining the overall costs / cost-effectiveness, the evaluation established the following findings, showing actual decisions taken and measures put in place to assure the cost-effectiveness of the processes:

- The Commission delegated major parts of the implementation tasks to the Executive Agency (EACEA) based on MoUs. The cost-effectiveness of this approach was analysed in-depth in a cost-benefit analysis[91]. This analysis showed that the savings from delegating the tasks can be up to 25% (over all programmes delegated to EACEA) if compared with the "in-house option", representing the option that a DG (here DG ECHO) implements initiatives 100% in-house[92].

[91] IFC/GHK, Cost Benefit Analysis for the delegation of certain tasks regarding the implementation of Union Programmes 2014 – 2020 to the Executive Agencies, August 2013

[92] The fact that the initiative does not yet run at full capacity should not be regarded as this fact has similar impact on the "in-house option" (provision of staff and resources to run at full capacity). If, however, the use of funds / number of deployments remain for a longer period below planning, a revision of the workload estimation and the related compensation for the Executive Agency is advisable.

- The Commission/ EACEA applied formal tendering for the procurement of all required support services (e.g. as required in the Delegated Regulation) such as the training of volunteers and the insurance of deployed volunteers (including the apprenticeship phase). For some other support services, DG ECHO used existing framework contracts (e.g. communication support services such as media development).
- The essential services contracts are designed to basically only create variable costs (training contract and insurance contract). This concept results in the fact that costs only occur in case of use of services and can therefore be called good practice.
- The Commission requires narrative explanations in the EUAV calls for proposal (Deployment and CB / TA) on how far the co-funded project intends to achieve cost-effectiveness[93]. The relevant section on cost-effectiveness is evaluated by external experts who support the evaluation of the grant proposals and therefore assure that this aspect is looked at before selection (which can be considered as an element of cost-conscious donor behaviour). The assessment criteria are explicit in the calls for proposal.

4.5.3.2 Comparison of selected outputs / services

Comparison of average costs per volunteering month

The overall average cost per volunteer month is an adequate measure to gain an indication of the comparative cost-effectiveness of a volunteering programme. At the same time this indicator is useful if conducting an opportunity cost analysis (i.e. assessing if there is any other means that delivered the same outcome at lower costs). It is difficult to find benchmarks as the EUAV Initiative is somehow unique (involving European volunteers in humanitarian aid provision in a systemised way). For this exercise, the evaluation took UNV and the EUAV pilot projects as a benchmark. This analysis, despite some limitations, shows that the current EUAV deployment costs are quite similar to the others. The EUAV programme has on average roughly 10% lower average costs per volunteering month if compared with UNV / EUAV pilot projects and a significantly reduced variation if comparing the cost ranges of the individual projects (compared to the variations within the group of EUAV pilot projects – see Table 14).

It needs to be noted that the annual costs for the implementation of the delegated tasks to the Executive Agency are proportionally included in the calculation (33% of the annual total costs)[94].

[93] Relevant chapter in the e-forms of the calls: **E.6 Cost effectiveness** / "Please describe the strategy adopted to ensure that the proposed results and objectives will be achieved in the most economical way. Explain the principles of budget allocation amongst partners. Indicate the arrangements adopted for financial management"

[94] Annual budget allocated for the Executive Agency EACEA to manage EUAV is 989,000 EURO (DG ECHO AAR 2016, p.68)

Table 14: Comparison of average costs per volunteering month

Initiative / Programme	Period	Number of projects	Number of volunteers / vacancies	Cost range in EUR/Volunteering month by project (min. – max.)	Average costs EURO/volunteering month	Remark
EUAV (Pilot Phase / Pilot Projects)	2011 - 13	12	277	2,698 – 18,156	**4,414**	All costs included
EUAV Initiative	2015 - 16	6	206	2,406 – 5,043	**4,087**	All cost included (plus 33 % of EACEA budget)
UNV – International Volunteers	2017	NA	NA	NA	**4,386**	So called pro-forma costs
UNV – International Young volunteers	2017	NA	NA	NA	**3,296**	So called pro-forma costs

Sources: DG ECHO Pilot Project Evaluation 2014, EACEA E-Forms 2017, UNV[95]

Remark: The monthly average costs of the benchmark examples are not fully comparable with each other due to varying costing structures and calculation bases and due to the fact that UNV and EUAV are in many aspects different (e.g. "rapid" deployment roster; host organisations of UNV are mostly UN country offices). Despite these limitations, it seems clear that the current costs of EUAV are in a "comparable range" with UNV and with the EUAV pilot projects during the period 2011–13.

4.5.3.3 Costs of main services contracts

Two larger services contracts have been placed with providers, based on the requirements of the standards / reference documents: A training contract and an insurance contract for candidate volunteers / deployed volunteers (including apprentice phase).

Costs for training

The evaluation team reviewed the training programme for the EUAV volunteers. All stakeholders unanimously endorsed the quality and adequacy of the training, and the training programme is quite comparable to the basic modules of the proven training in the context of the UCPM[96] when comparing both training offers, EUAV shows comparable costs for its centralised training component[97]. Based on the comparison of content and costs, it can be concluded that the training offered is cost-effective.

Cost for the insurance

The insurance contract was awarded to an insurance company in Belgium after a competitive tender procedure. The actual contract value is 2.4 m EURO for 66 months with the option for a 24 month extension (originally a total of 4 m EURO was budgeted in 2014). The Executive Agency receives and shares with DG ECHO a weekly report on the insured volunteers (the most reliable and current information on volunteer deployments). The Executive Agency has an annual meeting with the contractor, and staff follow an incident management procedure. To date, the contract has been running smoothly with no major incidents and no complaints from volunteers. Overall, the insurance and related processes seem to be cost-effective, well managed and adapted to the needs of the EUAV Initiative.

4.5.4 Reflection on the improvement of systemic cost-effectiveness

When looking at the average costs per volunteering month it is clear that the involvement of volunteers comes at a price. The evaluation does not individually assess the cost-effectiveness of

[95] UNV,"Proforma Cost for international UN Volunteers for UN Partner Agencies for 2017" - average calculated from all listed countries for International UN Volunteers / and International UN Youth Volunteers
[96] EU Civil Protection Mechanism
[97] For reasons of confidentiality the concrete figures cannot be provided.

the activities under each project, but looking at the entire system there are some areas and improvements which are likely to lead to improved cost-effectiveness:

- **Enabling continuous engagement** - As the EUAV is organised today, there is no provision to enable EUAV volunteers to repeatedly contribute. Today the assignments of the volunteers can be considered as "one-off" assignments – although repeated volunteering is not excluded, at the same time it's not systemised and defined. Systemic cost-effectiveness could be improved by offering renewals[98] and developing a roster (e.g. a data-base based on the functions and availability of pre-assessed and pre-trained volunteers made available to humanitarian organisations).
- **Adding needs-based components** – The majority of the EUAV volunteers belong in the age group 25 – 34 years (78% of all EUAV volunteers). Interviews with the volunteers during field missions, supported by the survey, showed that core interests of these volunteers include gaining experience in the humanitarian field, and career development and orientation. At the same time, most of the sending organisations stated[99] that the major benefit from engaging in the EUAV Initiative is to get in contact with new talents / capacities and to get to know potential future staff members in a real working situation. In the context of these stakeholder interests / needs the EUAV deployment component could be expanded to support these by considering EUAV volunteer involvement in the classical "career development schemes" of the INGOs (in addition to the existing level of offers today) and furthermore, by sensitising DG ECHO partners for example to consider including "junior expert positions" in their proposals which could possibly be staffed by EUAV volunteers[100]. Overall cost-effectiveness is likely to increase by applying these two measures.

- **Streamlining preparatory assistance for certification** - The technical assistance projects funded by the EUAV envelope have the objective to strengthen the capacity to manage volunteers and to enable new organisations to successfully request certification as an EUAV sending organisation (particularly for organisations from the EU 13 countries[101], in which volunteerism and international volunteering is considered not to be sufficiently developed). The current technical assistance projects do not explicitly contain the objective to get organisations certified, but all e-forms indicate that the project intends to enable / strengthen EU partners to comply with the certification mechanism put in place by EUAV.

Conclusion

The processes put in place to implement the EUAV Initiative can be called efficient. The process design is done in a cost-conscious way; in particular the decision to delegate large parts of the implementation is more cost-effective if compared to "in-house" solutions, which was confirmed by an in-depth cost-benefit analysis conducted in 2013, promising savings of about 25% compared to the in-house alternative.

Services contracts have to be awarded after competitive tendering (e.g. training and insurance for volunteers) and costs from these contracts only occur when services are used (per capita / deployment). The grant applicants are requested to indicate the cost-effectiveness of their proposals and these statements of cost effectiveness are verified as part of the proposal evaluation conducted by external experts before selection.

Despite these positive findings, there is potential for improving the systemic cost-effectiveness though enabling continuous engagement for returned volunteers (e.g. database / roster), adding components to the eligible activities under the deployment component (e.g. co-funding of career

[98] If the EUAV volunteers e.g. want to expand the duration of their volunteering (reduces costs for training travel and management time)
[99] Humanitarian actors / INGOs
[100] By respecting the EUAV Regulation requirements
[101] The EU´s newer entrants: 13 countries which have joined since 2004—Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia

development placements; stimulation of junior experts placements in DG ECHO funded projects, and streamlining parts of the technical assistance service provision in preparation for certification as sending and hosting organisations.

Recommendation

- *(R5.5)* Re-design the technical assistance / capacity building concept by clearly separating / identifying the core activities (certification support / development of volunteering structures / organizational capacity building to prepare for or to respond to disasters).

Issues to be considered

- Review the opportunities to establish a mechanism to support junior positions in regular DG ECHO projects by involving EUAV volunteers.
- Review the opportunity to establish a mechanism to support career development schemes of DG ECHO partners (e.g. through co-funding of additional positions or, if not possible, by showing scenarios in which EUAV partners can benefit from EUAV in the context of their career development schemes).

4.5.5 Budget allocated

EQ – 16: To what extent was the allocated budget so far appropriate to what the Initiative was set out to achieve given the need to establish the implementation framework, including a pipeline of eligible certified organisations to manage deployment of volunteers?

The question of whether the allocated budget was appropriate touches two different levels of the Initiative, one is the set-up of the implementation framework and its management (programme level), and the other is the structure of eligible expenses at EUAV project level.

As a starting point to answer the evaluation question on budget appropriateness, it can be concluded that during the period 2014 – 2017 the EUAV Initiative has been successfully set-up with the available budget. The first implementation period however has seen that the level of interest and engagement was significantly overestimated and therefore the budget allocated was underused for those thematic priorities which are dependent on the responses to call for proposals, namely: deployment, technical assistance and capacity building.

Table 15: EUAV funds allocated and committed in the period 2015 - 16

Thematic priority	Heading	2015			2016		
		Allocated €	Committed €	% comm.	Allocated €	Committed €	% comm.
1	Deployment	8,400,000	1,365,045	**16%**	8,400,000	4,789,981	**57%**
2/3	Technical assistance / Capacity building	6,948,000	4,827,716	**69%**	7,960,000	2,803,026	**35%**

Source: Project information EACEA / Annual work plans/ Monitoring Report

Allocation of budget programme level

Some more specific findings at programme level are the following:

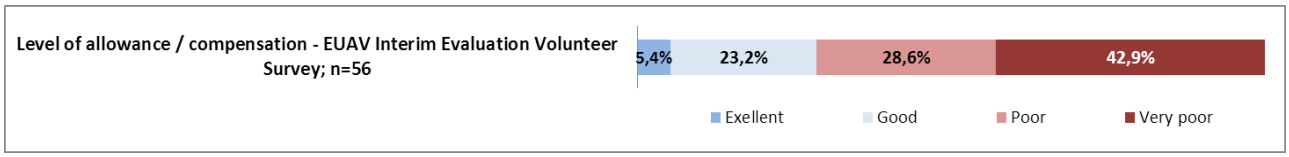
- The Executive Agency does not report on any shortage of funds with respect to requirements. The Agency indicates to have been able to establish the implementation framework and to cover the implementation related costs. However, due to the fact that the planned numbers of grants / deployed volunteers have not been reached by far, this finding has to be treated with care. The EA was not sure if their budget (the workforce provided and the support needs in terms of IT) would have been sufficient if the targets had been reached.

- The budget allocated for the different calls under the thematic priorities of the initiative (deployment, technical assistance, and capacity building) turned out to be overestimated with respect to the actual demand / applications for co-funding (see Table 15: EUAV funds allocated and committed in the period 2015 - 16).
- The EUAV team within DG ECHO stated that, according to their experience of implementing the communication and promotion activities, more budget / more activities would not have resulted in intensified engagement – therefore the budget available for communication / information appears sufficient. However, the overall establishment of the Initiative was, and still is, more demanding than expected. Several delays can be noted (e.g. online-volunteering and other platform functionalities such as the learning and development part), which are partly caused by too few human resources in the EUAV team within DG ECHO.
- The allocated funds for essential support services (e.g. training and insurance of volunteers) were sufficient to procure adequate services in competitive tendering procedures.

Allocation of budget / eligible expenses at project level

- In the context of the first round of deployment projects under EUAV (call 2015) all grantees interviewed indicated that the permitted staff costs (for the management of volunteers) of 20% of the deployment related budget were insufficient to manage the volunteer deployments as required. In response, the Commission changed the ceiling and now it is permitted to use up to 30% of the entire budget of a project for organisational staff costs (effective starting with the 2016 deployment calls). Some sending organisations claim this remains insufficient, whilst other organisations, particularly those where NGO workers earn less (e.g. Spain, Italy) say they can cover their volunteer management costs.
- Interviews with deployed volunteers during field missions revealed that in many cases the monthly allowance was not sufficient. More than 71 % of the respondents to the survey consider the allowances as poor or very poor (see Figure 9 below). In several cases, the volunteers had to invest their own savings to be able to afford their accommodation or were subsidised by the hosting organisation (the current remuneration depends on the country and is calculated by DG ECHO based on the requirements of Art. 25 of the Implementation Regulation).

Figure 9: Satisfaction with the level of allowance / compensation



Source: PARTICIP consortium, Volunteer Survey EUAV Interim Evaluation 2017

Conclusion

At programme level sufficient budget was made available to set up and manage the implementation framework of EUAV and to fund the delegated works of the Executive Agency. At project level some adjustments were necessary and consequently implemented in a flexible and efficient way by DG ECHO / Executive Agency (i.e. increased percentage for internal staff costs to manage deployments).

The necessary supporting services were procured without difficulties in competitive tender procedures and well below the initially allocated budget[102]. The allowance for the volunteers still creates problems as several of the interviewed volunteers describe the current rates as insufficient.

[102] e.g. for the insurance contract about 4 m EURO have been allocated, the competitive tender resulted in 2,4 m Euro of actual costs (variable costs per capita and deployment).

Due to the fact that the entire initiative still does not run to full capacity, it is difficult to draw any final conclusions on the appropriateness of funds, but from what can be seen, the available funding is appropriate to run the implementation framework at the planned capacity.

Recommendation

- *(R5.6)* Review of the allowances for volunteers as there are clear indications from the surveys and field mission interviews with volunteers that the allowances are not sufficient for the majority of the volunteers. More concrete indications could be captured with the EACEA post-deployment survey for returned volunteers[103].

4.5.6 Overall conclusion on efficiency

The overall conclusion on the efficiency of the EUAV is strictly based on the scope of the evaluation questions for the interim evaluation. The EUAV Initiative, due to the fact that it enables volunteers to provide humanitarian assistance, is based on a rather complex set of requirements, defined in the EUAV Regulation and its Delegated and Implementation Regulations. These requirements result in complications in comparison to regular humanitarian actions (e.g. need for certification, list of eligible countries, list of eligible activities, slow mobilisation / deployment and the like).

All of these limitations create inefficiencies if EUAV actions are compared with "regular" humanitarian response operations carried out by professional humanitarian workers. However, such a comparison is somehow unfair, as it does not account for the volunteerism component which is required by the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon and the five operational objectives of the Regulation, which are very demanding as they require the strengthening of the Unions´ capacity to provide humanitarian aid through the contributions of volunteers.

When purely judging on efficiency within the given scope of the Evaluation Question, the evaluation can state that:

- DG ECHO and EACEA have mastered the in-built complexity in efficient ways based on continuous improvements and the resulting simplifications (in line with the Regulation provisions). Good examples are the "Handbooks for Applicants" facilitating the understanding of the initiative and the project cycle management under EUAV funding.
- The monitoring framework, although complex due to the defined objectives in the Regulation, has proven adequate and manageable, helping to maintain supervision. However, real time management information is clearly missing and this prevents corrective measures (if necessary) being implemented in time.
- Overall, the evaluation can identify cost-conscious behaviour at DG ECHO / EACEA level, requesting partners to prove cost-effectiveness in their proposals, large services contracts are based on a variable cost structure (i.e. cost per use) and comparative unit costs (i.e. average costs per volunteering month) are comparable to other initiatives (despite some limitations in comparing schemes).
- The budget allocated to establish and run EUAV proved sufficient, however in-depth analysis is hardly possible and this finding is based on the statements of DG ECHO staff and EACEA staff who have had sufficient budget for what needed to be done. In this context however it must be stated that the Initiative does not yet run at full capacity and EACEA indicates that if it does so they would need more resources to run the scheme.

All in all, when looking at efficiency in the scope of the evaluation questions, the evaluation comes to the conclusion that the establishment and the running of the initiative, based on the requirements laid down in the EUAV Regulations can be called efficient. This statement explicitly excludes a

[103] This recommendation will require a change in the EUAV Regulations

comparative efficiency / cost-effectiveness analysis (i.e. comparing costs per results of EUAV with similar impact oriented actions of the regular humanitarian assistance provided through professional humanitarian actors) – this type of comparison was not in the scope of the interim evaluation.

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IN EUROPE", 2013

UNV, "Statistical and Financial Information for 2014", 2014

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Annex 2 - Organisations contacted

European Commission and Services

Organisation	Function of contact person	Location
European Commission - DG ECHO	EUAV Team in DG ECHO - Focal point / ECHO policy officer	Brussels
European Commission - DG ECHO	Evaluation Function TL	Brussels
European Commission - DG ECHO	Evaluation Function	Brussels
European Commission - DG ECHO	Head of Unit A/3 DRR / Evaluation / EUAV	Brussels
European Commission - DG ECHO	ECHO Policy Coordinator	Brussels
European Commission - DG ECHO	Head of Unit A4 Civil Protection Policy	Brussels
European Commission – DG ECHO	Head of Unit – C1 (Development and Regional Strategy II)	Brussels
European Commission - Executive Agency EACEA	Deputy Head of Unit – A6 Erasmus+ Sport Youth and EU Aid Volunteers	Brussels
European Commission - Executive Agency EACEA	Project Officer - Monitoring Framework / Deployment	Brussels
European Commission - Executive Agency EACEA	Project Officer – Certification Mechanism	Brussels
European Commission - Executive Agency EACEA	Project Officer - Training scheme for candidate volunteers	Brussels
European Commission - Executive Agency EACEA	Project Officer	Brussels
European Commission - Executive Agency EACEA	Project Officer –Technical Assistance and Capacity Building	Brussels
European Commission – DG EAG	Youth, Volunteer Solidarity and Traineeship Office	Brussels
European Commission – DG DEVCO	Assistant to DDG	Brussels
European Commission - EEAS	Training Advisor at EEAS (former focal point for the establishment of EUAV in DG ECHO)	Brussels

Persons contacted in the EU

Organisation	Function of contact person	Location
ACTED	representing HR	Paris
ACTED	representing Mobility	Paris
ACTED	representing EU Grants	Paris
ACTED	representing Communications	Paris
Alianza por la Solidaridad	Head of Humanitarian	Madrid
Alianza por la Solidaridad	Brussels office	Madrid
Alianza por la Solidaridad	Voluntariado y Participación Ciudadana	Madrid
Alianza por la Solidaridad	Voluntariado y Participación Ciudadana	Madrid
AWO International	Head of AWO International / General Manager	Berlin
Bundesanstalt Technisches Hilfswerk (THW) BMI	Head of Unit E2	Bonn
Bundesanstalt Technisches Hilfswerk (THW) BMI	Head of International Division	Bonn
Caritas Austria	Project officer	Vienna
Comhlamh	Programme Manager	Dublin
Comhlamh	EUAV manager	Dublin

Organisation	Function of contact person	Location
Comhlamh	Civic Service Volunteer	Dublin
Concern Worldwide	HR Director	Dublin
Concern Worldwide	Head of L&D	Dublin
Concern Worldwide	Director of International Programmes	Dublin
Concern Worldwide	Desk Manager for Haiti	Dublin
Concern Worldwide	EUAV Coordinator	Dublin
DFID	1st Secretary Humanitarian Affairs	Brussels
DGM, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Cheffe du Pôle Volontariat – Programmes Jeunesse	Paris
DGM, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Crisis Centre	Paris
DGM, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Rédacteur Volontariat	Paris
France Volontaires	Programmes Manager	Paris
German Red Cross	Head of Disaster Relief Unit	Berlin
GVC	Head of Europe, Education, Volunteering	Bologna
GVC	Project Coordinator, EUAV	Bologna
Humanitarian Logistics Association	Head of Service	UK (phone)
ICCO	Head of programmes /	Utrecht
ICCO	Head of international affairs	Utrecht
ICF Training Consortium	Consortium Lead Consultant	NL
IFRC / RC Office Brussels	Deputy Head of Office	Brussels
IFRC / RC Office Brussels	Disaster Management Officer	Brussels
International Forum for Volunteering in Development	Past Chair; consultant	UK, Telephone
La Guilde Européenne du Raid	Development Director	Paris
La Guilde Européenne du Raid	European Programmes Manager	Paris
La Guilde Européenne du Raid	EU Projects Manager	Haiti
MDF Training Consortium	Course Leader	NL
NOHA	General Manager	Brussels
NOHA	Operations Manager	Brussels
Protezione Civile	Head of international affairs	Rome
PUM (on behalf of CESES)	Business Development	Netherlands (email)
Save the Children UK	Head of Humanitarian Capacity Building	London
UNHCR	Senior External Relations Associate	Brussels
VOICE	Director	Brussels
VOICE	Progamme Coordinator	Brussels
VOICE	Programme Assistant	Brussels
VSO International	EC Partnerships Manager	London

Field Mission Latin America and Caribbean

Organisation	Function of contact person	Location
ACTED Haiti	Deputy Country Director	Haiti
Alianza por la Solidaridad Haiti	Coordinatrice Projet	Haiti
Alianza por la Solidaridad Haiti	Programmes Coordinator (previous)	Haiti
Concern Worldwide Haiti	Country Director	Haiti
Concern Worldwide Haiti	Head of Programmes	Haiti
ECHO	Chef de Bureau	Haiti
Espace Volontaire	Manager	Haiti
EUAV Haiti	EUAV volunteers with Concern Worldwide (2)	Haiti
EUAV Haiti	EUAV volunteer with ACTED	Haiti
EUAV Haiti	EUAV volunteers with GVC (2)	Haiti
EUAV Haiti	EUAV volunteers with MPP (2)	Haiti
EUAV Haiti	EUAV volunteers with Alianza (3)	Haiti
France Volontaires	Regional Representative	Haiti
France Volontaires	Comms Volunteer	Haiti
GVC Haiti	Coordinateur National	Haiti
GVC Italy	Regional Manager	Haiti
Mouvement des Paysans de Papaye	Directrice	Haiti
Mouvement des Paysans de Papaye	Mentor	Haiti
Mouvement des Paysans de Papaye	Coordinator, Technical Manager	Haiti
Alianza Ecuador	EUAV Manager	Ecuador
Caritas Ecuador	Volunteer Coordinator	Ecuador
Caritas Ecuador		Ecuador
DG ECHO	Oficial de Programa	Ecuador
Ecuasol	Director	Ecuador
EUAV Ecuador - volunteers	EUAV volunteers in Ecuador with Ecuasol (3)	Ecuador
FOCSIV		Ecuador / email

Field Mission Middle East

Organisation	Function of contact person	Location
Alianza Jordan	Programme Manager Alianza Jordan	Jordan
Alianza Jordan	EUAV volunteer, Senior Position, Protection expert	Jordan
Alianza Jordan	EUAV volunteer, Junior Position, Financial Management	Jordan
DG ECHO / RSO Amman	Acting Head of RSO	Jordan
Institute for Family Health (IFH)	Dept. Director of IFH	Jordan
Institute for Family Health (IFH)	Team Leader Gender Based Violence	Jordan
Institute for Family Health (IFH)	Dept. International Reporting and Financial Management and Planning	Jordan

Organisation	Function of contact person	Location
DG ECHO field office Lebanon	ECHO field officer	Lebanon
ACTED Lebanon	EUAV volunteer, Junior Position, Finance, Logistics and Admin	Lebanon
EUAV volunteer (GVC)	EUAV volunteer, Senior Position, Finance and Logistics	Lebanon
GVC	Global Education Coordinator	Lebanon
GVC	GVC Country Manager Syria	Lebanon
GVC	GVC International Protection Manager	Lebanon
GVC	GVC Wash Engineer (Junior Position on DG ECHO contract)	Lebanon
GVC	GVC Regional Coordinator Middle East	Lebanon

Field Mission South East Asia

Organisation	Function of contact person	Location
Fin Church Aid	Senior EU Aid Volunteer	Cambodia
GVC	Country director	Cambodia
GVC	EUAV volunteers (3)	Cambodia
Life with Dignity	Program director	Cambodia
Live with Dignity	Project officer	Cambodia
Live with Dignity	Director	Cambodia
People in Need	Acting country director	Cambodia
People in Need	EU aid volunteer	Cambodia
VSO Cambodia	Proposal development manager	Cambodia
Action Aid	Head of programmes	Myanmar
Caritas	Director	Myanmar
Caritas	Project officer	Myanmar
DG ECHO Bangkok	Head of office	Thailand

Annex 3 - Objectives outlined in the annual work plans for EUAV (2015 – 2017)

Objectives outlined in the annual work plans (2015 – 2017)		
2015	**2016**	**2017**
To contribute to **resilience building and disaster risk management** in vulnerable, fragile or disaster affected countries and forgotten crises, including actions in the following stages of the disaster management cycle: disaster prevention, preparedness, disaster risk reduction and recovery from natural and man-made disasters;	To contribute to resilience building and disaster risk management in vulnerable, fragile or disaster affected countries and forgotten crises, including actions in the following stages of the disaster management cycle: disaster prevention, preparedness, disaster risk reduction and recovery from natural and man-made disasters, early warning;	To contribute to **resilience building and disaster risk management** in vulnerable, fragile or disaster affected countries and forgotten crises, including actions in the following stages of the disaster management cycle: disaster prevention, preparedness, disaster risk reduction and recovery from natural and man-made disasters, early warning;
To prepare the selection, training and deployment of **100 junior and 250 senior Professionals** in vulnerable and disaster-affected communities in third countries;	To prepare the selection, training and deployment of **350 volunteers** in vulnerable and disaster-affected communities in third countries;	To prepare the selection, training and deployment of **525 volunteers** in vulnerable and disaster-affected communities in third countries;
Build capacities of and provide technical assistance for hosting and aspiring hosting organisations and of aspiring sending organisations, notably in tools and methods of risk and needs assessment along the disaster risk management cycle.	To continue capacity building and technical assistance for hosting and sending organisations, including in tools and methods of early warning for disasters;	To continue **capacity building and technical assistance** for hosting and sending organisations, including in tools and methods of early warning for disasters;
	To implement the training programme and training of candidate volunteers funded under the Work Programme for 2015;	To implement the **training programme** and training of candidate volunteers;
	To continue to support insurance service provision for EU Aid volunteers, apprentices, and participants to capacity building activities taking place in the European Union, funded under the Work Programme for 2014;	To continue to support **insurance** service provision for EU Aid volunteers, apprentices, and participants to capacity building activities taking place in the European Union, funded under the Work Programme for 2014;
To continue **certification of sending and hosting organisations;**	To continue certification of sending and hosting organisations	To continue **certification of sending and hosting organisations**
	To launch the EU Aid Volunteers Platform for registration, networking, online volunteering and learning.	To further develop and maintain the **EU Aid Volunteers Platform** for registration, networking, online volunteering and learning.
To **publically launch the** initiative, its network and online volunteering mechanism.		To continue the outreach activities and the promotion of the EU Aid Volunteers.

Annex 4 - Reflection on the establishment of a pool / roster of volunteers

The case study on recruitment notes stakeholders' dissatisfaction with the length of the recruitment and selection process, and the danger of SOs losing candidates to other opportunities.

EACEA and DG ECHO may decide to amend elements of the process (e.g. the management of the training) to take these views into account. An alternative is to create a volunteer pool, or roster. This is not a new idea for EUAV. The evaluation of the pilot projects (page 20) reports on conversations with DG ECHO which seem to suggest the pool idea was the intention at that time; the idea of a database of candidate volunteers (a 'pool' or 'roster') was mentioned in the 2012 Impact Assessment (Option 2, module 4); and it was reaffirmed as desirable by the February 2017 network meeting and in a number of interviews during this evaluation.

One volunteer noted in their survey response: *"Furthermore, the process from first application to deployment took 7 months in my case, this is not advisable for any scheme where the payment is generally low and the assignment of short duration. Perhaps a two-stage application (first to become a registered EUAV and then the process for a particular assignment), would allow more people to participate".* And another: *"It might be useful to first support a pool of volunteers from which organisations can hire at short notice (also to fill gaps in actual emergencies arising). This would allow for less commitment up front from the side of the volunteer and probably better matches as there can be a pre-selection among all volunteers that may qualify."*

Regulation no. 375 is clear about the process: candidate volunteers are recruited and trained before being entered onto the EUAV database. And Regulation no. 1244 stipulates that candidate volunteers must be found as a result of a vacancy notification. This proposal cannot be implemented currently therefore but by the time of the proposed legal review may be seen as a logical step after these initial years of deployment contracts.

Some of the advantages of such a roster, which would address issues encountered by the evaluators, include:

- The delays in selection, and the potential for drop-out, can be considerably reduced with a roster. Vacancies can be displayed on the database for pre-qualified candidates to apply for. Or SOs can search the roster (via whatever system can assure data protection) and produce a short-list for interview. The UN Agencies advise they are unlikely to be part of EUAV as it is currently set up (too long a process to be part of the humanitarian effort, with UNV being able to respond within 15-30 days) but would take part if a deployable roster were available.
- The evaluators were advised by DG ECHO that SOs are not always entering volunteer data into the database, which reduces its value and would not be required if a roster was developed.
- The idea could also contribute to Objective 5 by allowing each Member State to run assessment processes and thus diversify national representation among deployed volunteers.
- Such a roster offers more chance of return on investment; otherwise every volunteer must be seen as a one-off investment for the EUAV Initiative

There are questions DG ECHO would have to answer in considering this idea, aside from changes to the Regulations:

- Funding of national assessment processes;

- Ensuring the pool is sufficiently large and diverse to satisfy all, or a large number of deployment requirements;
- Data protection and database management;
- A training calendar able to handle selected candidates at relatively short-notice.

Functionalities and limitations of the volunteer database today (at a glance)

Access to the volunteers / reserve candidates database today is limited to DG ECHO and the respective sending organisation. The overall process is currently organised as follows:

The legislation requires SOs to enter the data of the selected and trained EUAV Volunteer in the database after explicit consent of the volunteer; the volunteer can then decide to add more information about himself / herself if he/she wishes to.

The profile of the volunteer is then linked to the specific vacancy on which the volunteer has been recruited. This allows DG ECHO to also see the profile of the volunteer. Reserve candidates also need to be added to the reserve list by the respective SOs.

Limitations: DG ECHO rejected the request from organisations to make this personal data of the volunteer available to all organisations (for data protection reasons). SOs are not currently entering volunteer data despite reminders.

If an organisation needs a reserve volunteer with a specific profile, DG ECHO has access to all volunteers registered in the database and can put the volunteer and the organisation in contact with each other.

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Annex 5 - Reflections on wording of the Regulation

The Regulation (375/2014 Article 27) allows for a Legal Review in 2019. As the evaluators spoke to stakeholders of EUAV, and analysed survey responses, we noted areas where, during any legal review, the appropriate authorities could consider amendments to the Delegated Regulation and the Implementing Regulation:

1. To consider allowing the vacancy period to last less than one month if suitable candidates have been found. Regulation no 1244, Article 5/3
2. The 5 Objectives: Regulation No 375, Article 7. No changes are proposed for Objective 2.
   a) An objective relating to the end-beneficiaries will enhance the relevance of EUAV. We propose that **Objective 1's** focus is less on the Union's needs than on those of the end-beneficiaries. Examples might be: ***'Ensure that improvements in the Union's capacity to provide humanitarian aid deliver results for [all stakeholders]'*** or ***'Enhance the impact of the Union's humanitarian aid through increased human and organisational capacity'***.
   b) **Objective 3:** with DG ECHO's commitment to the localisation agenda this objective remains critically relevant. We suggest that DG ECHO could include in this objective relevant terminology from their commitment to the World Humanitarian Summit 2016. This would explicitly show that EUAV is contributing to the Grand Bargain.
   c) **Objective 4:** as a requirement of the Consensus for DG ECHO such communication should be continued. However to make it more relevant to the stakeholders new phrases could be added such as: ***'…., as well as the role of all stakeholders in implementing those principles, and others which are part of DG ECHO humanitarian policy.'***
   d) **Objective 5:** The standards are perhaps the element of EUAV most relevant to this objective and EUAV could consider limiting its 'coherence' agenda to these while separately encouraging volunteering. For example: ***'Use EUAV and its standards to support coherence and consistency across Member States, and improve opportunities for Union citizens to participate in humanitarian aid and activities'.***
3. The inclusion of the word 'profile' in the evaluation ToR's request to consider EUAV's relevance[104] was puzzling as it is not a word defined or consistently used in the regulations. The phrase 'competence profile' appears in regulation n°375/4. 'Skills' is used most often in the regulations as separate from competences (in 1398/1e and 2e for example) and they are not, for example, a required part of the task descriptions or vacancy announcements. Equally, skills cannot be equated to the technical competences of Annex 1 as these are defined (1398/2) as 'knowledge'. In 1398/2a skills are defined as included in competences and refer to the European Reference Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, which includes language. In answering this question the evaluators have taken 'profiles and skill sets' to incorporate all competences i.e. the knowledge, skills and attitudes a volunteer can offer to a host organisation. We suggest that DG ECHO and EACEA use such terms consistently in their communication and, when possible, in the regulation, though this lack of clarity has no noted impact on the efficiency or objectives of EUAV.

[104] Terms of reference for the evaluation: section 3.3. 1c

Annex 6 - Additional analysis of different actions on relevance related to EQ2

The evaluation ToR restrict the space in the main report so some further information is provided here on some of the types of action supported by EUAV.

To what extent has the action of **defining standards and procedures regarding candidates and volunteers** been relevant to the Initiative's objectives?

This action (375/9) embraces the definition (not the oversight or the implementation) of standards for recruitment and management and deployment of volunteers, competence framework, legal compliance by SOs and HOs, partnership standards, skills recognition, insurance, duty of care and performance monitoring.

Work contributing to the definition of these standards was undertaken following the "2013 Preparatory Action for the EU Aid Volunteers – Volunteer management standards and certification - Lot 2 (ECHO/EVHA/BUD/2013/01006)" (and Lot 1 in relation to the competence framework). All Options presented in the Impact Assessment assumed some such standards would exist – even option 1 focusses on standards relating to the volunteers' recruitment.

Benefitting from this preparatory work, the subsequent decisions on these standards, and their definitions in the Delegated and Implementing Regulations, ensured three things:

- that the process of defining them ensured that sector good practices were compared and considered in relation to EUAV's planned objectives, and that considerable (and ongoing) consultation took place with expected users of EUAV
- the fact of defining them could reassure decision-makers (e.g. the security advisor in DG ECHO) that EUAV was assessing and mitigating risk;
- the result of defining them was that EUAV was launched into the market, with the learnings from the pilot projects as an extra input, as a credibly well-researched and tested initiative.

To what extent has the action **of certification of sending and hosting organisations** been relevant to the Initiative's objectives?

Background

The purpose of certification in Article 10 is to '[ensure] that sending organisations comply with the standards and procedures referred to in Article 9' - and a further sentence (4) extends this to HOs. It is a one-off (renewable every three years) exercise which is organisations' entry card to access EUAV funding for deployment.

Findings

In September 2017, 141 organisations have been certified[105]. EACEA reports that one SO applying for certification has been rejected, and 2 HOs have 'dropped out'. 108 of these organisations are hosting volunteers and benefit therefore from much welcome strengthening of their capacities, under objective 3 (93% of satisfaction in the surveys). Considering the Initiative objectives of improving the skills and work conditions of volunteers (objective 2), building capacity of HOs (objective 3 - above) and enhancing consistency of EU humanitarian volunteering (objective 5) – and thus contributing as such to the overall strengthening of humanitarian aid (objective 1), prior

[105] Status September 2017

certification of organisations is a cornerstone of the whole process. However, certification as it is currently performed has had a mixed reception.

- In survey responses, most HOs are positive about certification (85%), as they are often assisted in the process by some SO. Among European organisations also (half of whom are not FPA partners), the perception was mostly positive. Whilst 14% found the certification process "straightforward and no major challenge", 50% estimated that it was "challenging but we could handle it", and 7% needed assistance to complete the process. 35% also found the certification process "very cumbersome, in need of simplification" .In interviews, the feedback from volunteering and other non-FPA organisations, particularly smaller ones, is that certification is helpful, relevant to improving their capacity, particularly if they have had little previous connection to humanitarian work. Alianza made the point at Network Meeting of February 2017 (page 18) that: *'The certification process is seen as challenging but is a good opportunity to find out about the EU Aid Volunteers' programme and to strengthen the organisation's capacity*.'
- However, only 15 SOs out of 33 are also members of the FPA and FAFA partnership frameworks of DG ECHO. These frameworks include the most professional humanitarian actors in the EU and worldwide: 206 NGO and International Organisations, 6 EU specialised agencies and 17 UN Agencies. Many of these tend to perceive the EUAV certification process as a duplication of the stringent FPA/FAFA certification process that they have already completed, and thus a lack of trust in existing and proven mechanisms. There are today two simplifications for FPA partners when applying for EUAV certification: no need to prove that they work in humanitarian aid; Documents about equal opportunity, non-discrimination, protection of children, vulnerable adults and sexual abuse are not required.
- The EUAV certification appears therefore, for many FPA/FAFA organisations, as a serious hurdle against starting the registration into the Initiative: on some points, the EUAV requirements oblige the partners to heavy transaction costs and additional workload of reformulating approaches for administrative reasons, in order e.g. to testify about a single integrated policy of Duty of Care, whereas they already have all the necessary components (duly accepted by FPA) disseminated under the multiple management aspects of Staff Wellbeing, Security, or Performance (see also case study on certification). Such requirements are often leading to internal resistance by some of the key departments within the partners' organisations, such as with the Human Resources in the case of UNHCR.
- It should be outlined, as shown in the case study, that the FPA application questionnaire (points 12-22) duly covers people management, including volunteers. FPA is concerned with "the provision of fair working conditions of humanitarian workers, volunteers or salaried, with special attention to: their safety in the field, professional development and training, equal opportunity, staff grievances, wrongdoing, staff evaluations and reviews…". Point 20 of the FPA questionnaire furthermore ensures that the partner has subscribed to the People In Aid code of good practice, which was until 2015 the key reference among humanitarian actors regarding the management and support of aid personnel, both staff and volunteers.
- Somewhat in contradiction with the stated satisfaction in the surveys, the majority of hosting organisations interviewed on field missions were unaware of either the fact and meaning of certification, or what the process had been. This was due to staff changes or the fact that a European Head Office had handled it for them. This doesn't necessarily mean the HO does not fulfil the standards but it lessens the relevance of the certification for HOs (Objective 3) and leads in some cases to worrying situations[106]. It means also that the relevance is

[106] Illustration were found in Ecuador and Jordan, where EUAV volunteers were "seconded" by their HOs to other, non-certified local organisations. There is currently no way for EACEA to ensure that these non-certified LNGOs are going to follow rules to which they have not been properly introduced – except by forbidding this practice.

primarily for DG ECHO (assurance) and for the volunteers (conformity with good practice). No HOs in the survey noted that certification in itself built their capacity.

To what extent has the action of **identification and selection of candidate volunteers** been relevant to the Initiative's objectives?

All volunteer-senders assess their applicants in one way or another (interview, assessment days, application forms or essays). Many sending organisations, outside EUAV, are not so rigorous about defining the level of skills required and the details of the task assignments. EUAV volunteers have seen these as a distinguishing characteristic of EUAV and attracted them to apply.

To what extent has the action of **training selected candidates** been relevant to the Initiative's objectives?

The training is online and face-to-face, and is a pre-requisite for volunteers to be deployed. The purpose, according to Article 12 is '*to prepare the candidate volunteers for deployment to support and complement humanitarian aid'*.

Alternatives to training exist: some similar schemes (e.g. Save UK) have training integrated into the traineeship deployment; organisational internship programmes rely on in-house inductions. The fact that EUAV is almost unique in being humanitarian and transnational suggests that candidates require training both to understand the humanitarian context and to become part of the network EUAV aspires to build.

Some candidates, especially Senior Volunteers, need less training than others (though there are optional modules in the training curriculum). This was a view from SOs, who struggled with attracting them because of the requirements, and from both senior and junior volunteers. The volunteers who have experience and strongly developed technical skills (where they are less likely to develop those skills on their deployment than to benefit from applying them in the field) commented on the value of skills they could develop and apply such as project management and facilitation.

Interviewees felt that some of the modules seemed to focus more on the response end of the LRRD spectrum, while most volunteers are working closer to the other end. While this issue is more easily identifiable with modules on how the humanitarian system works (coordination mechanisms and so on) it also seemed to appear in other areas such as the security training and psychological first aid, which were closer to the needs of emergency responders. Having said that, there was no sense from interviewees that anything was missing from the course. Specifically for Objective 4, the training is likely to be the first time many volunteers encounter the principles and the Consensus.

One SO provided figures which showed that more than 50% of their drop-outs take place after the training. It is only the SO induction which makes the deployment seem real to the volunteer (the SO's drop-outs which occurred after induction were, all but one, because the volunteer now knew enough about the project/structure/system and didn't want to engage in it). One volunteer turned down for a deployment following training was dismissive about the waste of the Commission's investment.

HOs were unaware of what the training, as opposed to any other competency development, skills or experience, had contributed to the volunteers. According to respondents the volunteer assessments from the training are not shared, or used as part of the L&D process: they are supposed to be the base for the volunteer's personalised L&D plan.

To what extent has the action of **deploying volunteers in third countries** been relevant to the Initiative's objectives?

Deployments are intended, according to Article 14, to 'meet the real needs expressed at local level by the hosting organisation'. All but one HO was positive about the relevance of deployment to their organisation's needs, and 12 out of the 14 felt deployment was relevant to the communities' needs also (Q29). One alternative to deployment is online volunteering, which is already an accepted action as part of deployment contracts.

The Call for Proposals 2017, for deployments, states: "*These projects will contribute to strengthening the Union's capacity to provide needs-based humanitarian aid aimed at strengthening the capacity and resilience of vulnerable and disaster-affected communities in third countries by focusing on disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and enhancing the link between relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD). In addition, these projects may also strengthen the capacities of implementing sending and hosting organisations participating or intending to participate in the EU Aid Volunteers initiative, including in tools and methods of early warning for disasters.*"

Most volunteers met during field missions, viewed on their youtube interviews and in survey responses noted that humanitarian work or work experience was a key motivation for their application.

To what extent has the action of **setting up a network for all key-stakeholders** been relevant to the Initiative's objectives?

The intent of the networking is, among many activities in Article 16, to facilitate knowledge-sharing and partnership-building.

The network is nascent and not many volunteers or organisations have used it. The network meeting in February 2017 identified many uses for networking, such as technical support for deployed volunteers (Objective 2 and 3), putting alumni in touch with new volunteers (objective 5). Volunteers interviewed would like to network, particularly with those from the same training course. Sending organisations new to volunteer-sending or humanitarian work said they need such a network to find potential EUAV partners (Objective 5 and 1) – though most existing SOs say they would not choose to partner with an unknown organisation. A number of TA and CB proposals have been based around existing networks (Alliance 2015 or Caritas or ACT Alliance for example) through which organisations already have a relationship. DG ECHO has been pleased to fund these though they create no new partnerships in the short term.

To what extent has the action of **communication and awareness raising** been relevant to the Initiative's objectives?

The purpose as set out in Article 17 is to 'promote the EUAV initiative and to encourage volunteering in humanitarian aid'. The Commission, SOs, HOs and volunteers are all required to communicate about EUAV. The action is relevant to trying to achieve the purpose, and the need is great: EUAV is not well known even within certified organisations, and not respected by, for example, humanitarian teams even where volunteers are being deployed.

Annex 7 - Detailed analysis of sub-questions related to EQ3

The evaluation matrix suggested sub-questions of EQ3 for further analysis. The evaluation ToR restrict the space in the main report so the detail is set out here on:

- Whether the standards are being followed;
- Problems which mean volunteers' skills may not be optimally used.

Are the proposed standards (in 375 and 1398) being followed by HO and SO?

The relevant articles from Regulation No 375 which refer to standards are 3, 4, 7, 8, 13 and 21. The relevant article from Regulation No 1398 is 6.

- 8 out of 9 HO survey respondents judged the standards and procedures adequate (Q29).
- The low number of returned volunteers (no more than 10) means the evaluators cannot assess the professional recognition process of 1398/6.
- Inductions - articles 11, 12 and 18 - are not defined so as to develop skills or competences. This allows the focus on organisational and technical context, policy awareness, the specific role etc. – and is the right approach.
- Regulation 375 Article 3 (which covers 4-7) on identification and selection of volunteers: our finding is that the output and outcomes are being achieved by the process as the article requires, but the process of partnership is not as desired. The article wishes for joint working and joint decisions between HO and SO but these have not always been possible.
    - The development of task descriptions appears to have been fully collaborative. This has been easier when SOs are working with HOs which are their own field offices: their EUAV deployments have often been part of larger projects and therefore field needs and skills gaps are already identified.
    - There have been several reasons why the SOs have taken a lead on identification and selection. Poor connectivity or pressures on staff time meant that deadlines were not being met by HOs. Longlists were not therefore always supplied (article 6/2) and interviews did not always have HO participation (which is acceptable according to 6/3). HOs were making the final decisions as required by 7/1.

- Article 13 apprenticeships: these are deemed to be very successful by those who have used them. They have often been used to provide organisational context where the volunteer is being deployed to an HO which is the SO's field office. They have also been used as way for volunteers to know their colleagues who might support them during the deployment; indeed several SOs require an apprenticeship where there is no one in the HO with the technical skills to support the volunteer e.g. the volunteer will be the sole accountant or communications person in the HO. As a result volunteers have been able to work more autonomously and have support mechanisms if the working situation is difficult.
- Article 21 mentoring: the objective of the mentoring is to support volunteers in the development of skills. The mentor is supposed to be from the HO, though some SOs are offering an SO mentor. This is not happening as the article requires. The impact is being felt more by the volunteer (no mentor at the HO, no learning plan) and will be seen by EACEA at the end of the volunteer cycle where recognition will likely be cobbled together or poor.

Do volunteers´ skills and profile adequately address the identified needs?

From interviews, field missions and surveys it became clear that there were a number of generic problems related to whether the volunteers' skills adequately addressed the needs.

a) Where the needs which helped define the task description are out of date or arbitrarily changed, or the response to those needs are poorly thought through, then the relevance of the volunteer's skills may be reduced.

Several volunteers arrived in Haiti just after Hurricane Matthew, which meant volunteers were asked to do work different from her assigned task. Several comments in the volunteers' survey referred to this, for example (Q25): *" Clarify the position of the volunteer: according to what I understood, this program is looking for specific professionals so we are not supposed to help the organization on WHAT EVER THEY NEED, but our job should be in line with our profile.*"

It was clear to the evaluators on their field missions that there were frequent mismatches between the original task and the situation (whether inside the HO or in the field, depending on the volunteer's task) the volunteer encountered upon deployment. The main reason for this was that the project for which the volunteer's skills were requested had not been funded, or had changed due to the delay between needs assessment and deployment.

Despite this no volunteer was entirely unhappy with the tasks they were doing even if they were slightly different tasks or responsibilities, on secondment to a third organisation or, in one case, something completely different which they were able to do and which was valuable to the local community. Some were adamant that it was only the task description which made them apply (not EUAV or the sector or the SO). Only one volunteer interviewed felt that the HO and SO had failed to understand the task he was now faced with while two said they would have returned home if suitable replacement work had not been found. As HOs pointed out, this said a lot about the selection of volunteers with suitable competences such as flexibility and self-direction.

The volunteer survey showed that other volunteers were not so satisfied with such changes, though one pointed out happily that the flexibility allowed him/her to do much more than envisioned envisaged?. 37% of answers to the question 'information on the assignment matched the project reality' were poor or very poor, compared to 30% which rated it excellent or good. "*The project reality was completely different from both, the terms of reference of the original vacancy, and the information about the assignment gave me during the predeploy[ment] training in [Europe]." "When I arrived in [country] I realize I was not going to work in [the capital] and not for [the HO] and not on that project."*

b) There are occasions when less than optimal circumstances in the HO or in the field make the level of skills redundant. Examples include poor preparation by HOs for the deployment, poor management of volunteers by HOs, security or other field-based restrictions. (this should normally not happen thanks to the certification....)

There were no circumstances the evaluators heard of where field restrictions made the objectives undeliverable, though volunteers in Lebanon were working remotely for Syria. There were examples, from field missions and survey responses, of poor management by HOs which meant the volunteer could not address their tasks: examples include a manager apparently with no personal empathy or understanding of the situation, and another involved an office which needed warm bodies to help them catch up on core work (report-writing and data-gathering unrelated to the volunteers' project) before any other tasks could be addressed. In one case a volunteer was assumed by HO staff to be an intern who could be given tasks such as photocopying. The survey data (above) show a worrying proportion of volunteers unhappy with the support from their HOs.

c) Where the original identified need has changed due to the late arrival of a volunteer.

This was not relevant during the field missions as there had been no late arrivals. However it is clear from SOs and HOs for 2016 deployment grants that the number of drop-outs will delay the arrival of volunteers beyond the expected start date. HOs interviewed on this were beginning to plan (with some despair already showing) but again it will require the flexibility of both SOs and DG ECHO.

d) Where there is poor selection of a volunteer.

1 out of 5 answers from SOs were dissatisfied (in retrospect) with the matching of volunteer profile with project needs. On field missions the only criticisms heard from HOs about volunteer competence and skills were minor. One volunteer's language was not fluent enough; one Haitian HO felt that a period of apprenticeship in-country would allow volunteers to pick up more of the culture and local language so their work would be more effective more quickly. There were no apparent issues with those volunteers who had been reserves though one volunteer who was rejected for a junior post after the training was later offered a senior position.

With the growing number of drop-outs SOs and HOs are going to need to be sure their reserves are of sufficient calibre, rather than recruiting just anybody available from the database to satisfy the HO. This cannot be checked now, as reserves for 2016 deployments are being recruited after the fieldwork for this evaluation, and will need to be checked by the final evaluation.

e) Where the attitude of the volunteer, and in-country factors may affect the volunteer's motivation.

33% of volunteer respondents judged their overall personal satisfaction with their volunteer assignment as poor or very poor. Nevertheless the negative responses to the questions about the relevance of EUAV for their personal ambitions are very low indeed (the highest is at 11%).

Some SOs and observers in Europe felt that the 'Rolls-Royce' brand, training and preparation the volunteers were receiving would make them less able to adjust to the Renault Deux Chevaux realities in many third countries. This was denied by HOs and volunteers interviewed during the field missions. There are a number of competencies in the framework which support this aspect of EUAV: 'overcoming difficulties', 'adapts constructively to changing circumstances', 'adjusts expectations to changing situations'.

The in-country discomforts expressed by volunteers during the field missions primarily relate to the work (as mentioned above). Otherwise issues mentioned were:

- Security restrictions in Haiti were strict, and would be in other countries also, and were limiting for a full life (exercise, social life);
- Remoteness, which one volunteer was using as preparation for the likely monotony of a future working life;
- Personalities: given that most volunteers share accommodation it is credit to their mindsets and acceptance of the situation that there has been less conflict. The only personality issue encountered during the field missions related to two volunteers living and working in the same space who were apparently fighting for position. Both left early.
- Team: all volunteers interviewed wanted to feel part of the cohort of EUAVs in their country and were looking, in vain, to DG ECHO to enable this. In Haiti all volunteers had been on the same training course - and Espace Volontaires had brought them together once (with a funding contribution from DG ECHO) but this camaraderie born from shared training will not apply in future years. This request was heard in the survey responses as well.

- Working hours and leave: no volunteers interviewed felt these were a problem. All were getting breaks, and although most were working 'NGO hours' (i.e. long working days) they did not voice this as a complaint.

While these have not had a negative impact on the work being carried out presently, DG ECHO must remember that there are few volunteers deployed before the evaluation. When numbers are greater there will need to be a greater emphasis on wellbeing –with the burden being on SOs to assure it. The two volunteers encountered on field missions who were working in perhaps the most difficult circumstances had fantastic support from their SO even when their HO was unresponsive.

Annex 8 - Case study on Apprenticeship, Recruitment and Deployment

Overall, 65.5% of volunteers rated their experience of the volunteer management cycle[107] as excellent or good. Many of their criticisms were levelled at the management of the processes by the SOs and HOs rather than the process itself, as established in the Regulations. Response from HOs show overwhelming satisfaction with deployment (84% satisfied with the relevance of deployment to their organisation's needs for example, while 70% of SOs are satisfied with the deployment element of EUAV (just one was not). 40% of SOs, though, are dissatisfied with the 'Standards and Requirements put in place related to the deployment (entire volunteer management cycle)', with 50% satisfied.

1. **Apprenticeships (**Regulation 1244, article 13): these are periods (they have varied from two weeks to three months, six months as the maximum) for Junior Volunteers to spend at the European SO before their deployment to the third-country. They have been used mostly to help volunteers learn about organisational policies and practices, and spend time with HQ colleagues, so their deployment is more productive. Almost every stakeholder is in favour of apprenticeships. One volunteer responded to the survey with: *"The 3 months of apprenticeship at the Head Quarter before deployment provided by my organization have been incredibly useful in terms of support, preparation to the assignment and preparation for Deployment."*

There is some confusion about apprenticeships:

- The benefits of, and process for apprenticeship are not clear to all SOs.
- The wording of the Regulation has misled some organisations into believing apprenticeship is for candidates who may not be strong enough for immediate deployment and is a necessary part of selection. This perhaps derives from earlier thinking e.g. the Impact Assessment referring to 'apprenticeship placements for less experienced volunteers' (page 5). EACEA is adamant this is not the purpose and described apprenticeship succinctly to the evaluators as *'this scheme is not compulsory to be used in the deployment project but allows to finance a pre-deployment posting in the sending organisation's offices'*.

Apprenticeships are not mandatory, and no-one suggested they should be. Several volunteers interviewed during field missions would not have taken the assignment if an apprenticeship were mandatory: they were experienced and had worked for INGOs before; they wanted to get to the country as soon as possible and there was sufficient technical support for them when required (from HO or SO).

A case study of Concern Worldwide's use of apprenticeships within EUAV.

Concern had previously run a Traineeship Programme. This included management and mentoring support of volunteers along with a 3 month Dublin-based apprenticeship and 12 month deployment. Concern used the learning from the two completed cycles of Traineeship Programmes in their design of the structure and support for the apprenticeships offered to Junior EU Aid Volunteers.

Concern is committed to the EUAV objective of building humanitarian capacity, so is running EUAV out of its HR function as part of the talent development programme. Volunteer profiles were designed to attract volunteers into the organisation with skill sets that are in demand within the organisation. The organisation hopes that the volunteers' experience, both in apprenticeship and

[107] 'Your overall assessment of the volunteering cycle (i.e. the management of your deployment from application to now)'

deployment, will encourage Volunteers to remain in the sector, hopefully building their careers with Concern. From previous traineeship programmes a number of Trainees have gone on to take up positions within the organisation.

The members of Concern's consortium recognised that apprenticeships were not a requirement of the EU Aid Volunteer Initiative and adopted different approaches to EUAV placements. Concern hosted all their five EU Aid Volunteers in Dublin in early 2017, all starting and ending their apprenticeships at the same time. During the apprenticeship period in Dublin, volunteers were put into host families as a kind of cultural acclimatisation similar to what they'd experience in their deployment. One volunteer found his family challenging, but recognised that this exercised his volunteer mind-set well. Across the consortium, PIN used a condensed shorter apprenticeship for some positions and ACTED, for one position, had a 6 month apprenticeship based in Paris followed by a 6 month deployment.

By including an apprenticeship period at the start of the programme, volunteers made strong connections in Concern's Head Office and gained a solid grounding in the organisation's approaches which led to positive experiences once deployed.

Concern believes that an apprenticeship is an important component of the junior EU Aid Volunteer programme and the evaluators heard the following expressed as the advantages of the apprenticeship:

- It familiarises the volunteers with the organisation's values, people, processes and policies essential to their effective working in-country. This aims to encourage increased autonomy during deployment.
- It enables volunteers to understand how their technical specialism integrates with others across Concern.
- Full funding from EUAV.
- It forms an important part of a psychological contract with the volunteers, showing how they are valued.
- *"For the mentor to get a sense of the strengths and areas for more capacity building of the EU volunteer so they can be built on/ strengthened while supporting remotely."*

Integration into Concern was helped by including volunteers in inductions which were also for new Concern staff from other countries. The period of the apprenticeship also included the completion of clear tasks and objectives, and mentoring from a relevant technical or geographical colleague. Volunteers were also asked to present to staff teams initially on their learning from the EUAV pilot training. This was developed further at the end of the apprenticeships when volunteers presented their learning from the apprenticeship to the Strategy, Advocacy and Learning Team and International Programmes Team.

The two volunteers interviewed felt the apprenticeship was essential for them, and that 3 months was the right time for a one-year deployment. One told Concern that it was an "*Opportunity for structured learning about all aspects of an INGO and humanitarian programming in Haiti, with the support of a technical mentor.*"

During the 3 months the volunteers benefitted from the mentors they had, and they worked on parallel work to what they would be carrying out in Haiti: one assisted a project in S Sudan which was similar to that in Haiti; the other drafted surveys for M&E in other countries and familiarised himself with data collection on digital devices.

Both had learnt in Dublin and were learning new skills in Haiti, and at least one will stay in the sector, noting that these new skills (language and technical) would help applications to paid positions. Comparing their situation to other volunteers, one Concern volunteer said they valued Concern's interest in them, expressed in part through the thoroughness of the apprenticeship: "*more so than other NGOs who are just deploying to get support in the field*."

Conclusions:

- Apprenticeships are appreciated by all stakeholders and are likely to be increasing the impact of the volunteers while on deployment (no evaluations are available to evidence this);
- There is some confusion about apprenticeships.

Issue to be considered:

- The background to the calls for proposal could usefully provide more information on apprenticeships to inform applicants of their value and to allow EACEA to monitor and evaluate. Areas of interest for evaluation would include: enhancement of volunteers' skills and experience during period of apprenticeship (as compared to the deployment); numbers of apprentices planned; tracking whether apprenticeships are used more by SOs where the HO is the SO's in-country office; tracking whether apprentices are more likely to stay with their SO (or in the sector) after deployment.

2. **Recruitment:** The high quality of volunteers being selected (said one SO: '*We're getting the cream of the crop: smart, articulate and know their stuff'*) gives the SOs a very positive view of the recruitment process; though a significant number (26%) of volunteers reported that the recruitment and selection process was poor or very poor.

There is no collected data on the number of candidates' applications, nor on diversity (by age, nationality, ethnicity, gender, level of experience). Where SO data is available we see by far the most applications being female and coming from France, Italy and Spain. One SO offered the evaluators their data: of 517 applications received 161 were from Italians, 122 from Spanish and 99 French. The next highest were 23 (Romania) and 18 (Belgium). See also the Alianza case study below.

Some SOs are receiving up to 33 applications per vacancy which is high[108], and that is despite an application process seen as overly complex (four submissions to be made, some of which duplicate).

Assessment is burdensome: with large numbers of applications for multiple jobs all arriving at the same time – and a deadline imposed by the requirements of the training cycle management. The application forms are helpful in assessment, while interviews are used for selection. It has not been possible for all HOs to be involved in interviews (due to connectivity or timing) but most have been party to final selection.

Not every selection is successful of course and SOs are increasingly concerned by the number of drop-outs during the selection process. There are large numbers: one SO has dealt with 16 drop-outs (for 28 vacancies), while another lost 10 selected volunteers even before the training. Of the 16, 10 individuals chose another role while 5 had a negative opinion of the process or the assignment.

This is often a consequence of timing, which all volunteers and SOs agree is an issue, and one Member State noted "*Deployment of EUAV is too slow for civil protection activities".* The length of time between vacancy announcement and deployment is too long (mostly over 6 months) and means many volunteers continue to keep their options open and might accept another role.

[108] GVC posted 30 vacancies and received 1006 applications for their 2015 deployment. 670 were female and 336 male. 68 candidates were selected for the training. The HOs took final decisions on the 30 following the post- training assessment.

Recruitment case study: Alianza por la Solidaridad

Alianza por la Solidaridad, based in Madrid, were involved in the pilot programmes and were an early certified SO. They have been part of TA, CB and deployment programmes and are very happy with the opportunities EUAV offers the organisation and its mission.

Their overarching comment on the process (from receipt of application to deployment date) is that it is too long, which encourages drop-out. The inflexibility of the training component of the process is a major problem. From the volunteers' point of view they applied in September and were deployed between February and May which was too delayed. Host Organisations interviewed were involved in the process as they expected.

Vacancies: must be posted for at least a month. With certain types of vacancy (e.g. junior admin or finance) Alianza know they will receive lots of applications quickly and would like to be able to close vacancies after 10 or 15 days.

Skills: Alianza are happy with the level of skills for most of their vacancies. Some technical roles receive fewer applications. These were the kind of positions which, during the pilot phase, they filled from employee volunteering but the length of the process, and the training requirements, make EUAV less suited to employee volunteering than were the pilots.

Applications: data on applications (by gender, nationality) is shown below. On average Alianza receives 17.7 applicants per post. The variation is huge though, with 90 applications for some posts. The factors Alianza have noted which influence applications are:

- Some countries are more attractive countries, like Nicaragua. Language requirements also dictate application volume: a volunteer for Haiti will have to have French for the deployment, English for the training - and perhaps some Spanish for working with Alianza HO staff.
- The length of mission: short assignments (not sufficient to get to know the context and have impact) and 18 month assignments (too long a commitment to volunteering) receive fewer than those for 6 or 12 months.
- Very technical or scientific vacancies receive fewer applications (engineers, nutritionists, agronomists, geologists) compared to other profiles from social sciences (e.g. project managers, gender experts, etc.). Also there is a big group of applicants for whom volunteering is an alternative to unemployment, which is less likely to be the case for more technical vacancies.

Application process: they believe this could be simplified. It is seen as tortuous for volunteers: the need to find a vacancy, then fill in some documents and then find the application form. Their volunteers suggested that one or other of a cv or an application form would be enough. Yet, the difficulty has advantages: selection can be done more quickly with multi-applicant posts by filtering properly-completed forms. All valid applications to Alianza came through the Platform, but '*a significant proportion*' came from Alianza's own marketing, or direct to Alianza – and were told to apply through the platform.

The fact that some applicants apply for many vacancies has not proved a problem for Alianza, but it is a factor that partnerships have to deal with.

Selection: One of Alianza's main concerns is to be sure that selected volunteers will focus on *'their role as professionals contributing to humanitarian action and local communities' resilience*.' Some applicants, and this can be exaggerated by the training and the focus on volunteer empowerment, might *'centre the experience around themselves (to learn, gain experience, to be taken good care of)'*, which is undesirable. One volunteer talked of how the interview with Alianza had addressed this for her: it was focussed on motivation and feelings, and how they would contribute to task fulfilment, rather than technical skills.

The fact that the first face-to-face meeting between Alianza and the selected volunteer is often at the induction in Madrid means that Alianza extend the selection phase up to that point: they might say no following induction in case attitudes are observed which imply the volunteer may not be able to adapt to the work/country/local team/organisational culture. Alianza also follow the Regulation on apprenticeships and treat them as part of selection process, with Alianza able to stop deployment following apprenticeships.

Drop-out: Data on drop-outs from Alianza recruitment process is shown below. Reasons for drop-out include:

a) the fact that the training has been in English means that good candidates may have been discarded even if the deployment does not require English. The news that training will also be in other languages is encouraging.
b) The long period before a proper connection with Alianza, and deployment, means volunteers drop out before or after training because of other job offers. This period is caused by, first, the requirement for logistical reasons to offer names to the trainers two months in advance (so the application process must start very early) and, second, the (up to) two week wait after the training which again causes discouragement or taking of alternative opportunities. It is necessary for SOs to be able to tell candidates soon after interview that they are first in the list for deployment, subject to training and induction in Madrid.
c) Even after the training there is potentially a long wait before the deployment date when the HOs (and visas and other requirements) are ready. At the present time Alianza is handling October training for February deployments, which means significant investment in keeping candidates motivated. Alianza believes the training should conform to the requirements of deployment and not the other way around. This means more trainings must be offered during the year.

The volunteers spoken to about deployment had either been in a job already or had rejected alternative offers for EUAV (EUAV was longer duration and in the field and would stretch their experience).

Total Applications	Female	Male	Other
655	482	172	1
%	73.59%	26.26%	0.15%

Total Applications	Spain	Italy	France	EU 13	Northern Europe[109]
655	329	148	53	47	22
%	50.23%	22.60%	8.09%	7.2%	3.3%

[109] UK, Netherlands, Germany and 4 Scandinavian countries

TOTAL SHORTLISTED (35 vacancies)	TOTAL DROP-OUTS	MOMENT OF DROP-OUT			
		BEFORE INTERVIEW	BEFORE TRAINING	AFTER TRAINING (BEFORE INDUCTION)	AFTER TRAINING (AFTER INDUCTION)
126	35	2	23	4	6
%	27.78%	5.71%	65.71%	11.43%	17.14%

REASON FOR DROP-OUT						
JOB (EXTENSION OR NEW)	OTHER OPPORTUNITIES (studies, volunteering, undefined)	ANOTHER POSITION	FAMILY (dependant baby)	TOO LONG MISSION	UNCLEAR/UNMATCHED EXPECTATIONS	OTHER/PERSONAL
10	8	2	1	2	3	9
28.57%	22.86%	5.71%	2.86%	5.71%	8.57%	25.71%

Conclusions:

- The recruitment process produces well-qualified and motivated volunteers for the HOs;
- Some SOs are deemed by volunteers to be poor in the running of their recruitment processes: limited communication is a particular concern;
- The length of time taken by the recruitment process (from advertisement through to deployment, including training) is responsible for drop-out which is harmful to all stakeholders.

Issues to be considered:

- Ideas suggested for reducing the time delay between vacancy and deployment, and therefore drop-outs, include: offering training throughout the year, having multiple calls for proposals during a year so deployment can be closer to the time of the needs assessment, or reducing the time between the training organisers receiving details of candidates and the training (the two months required by the trainers to arrange travel).
- SOs should be allowed to sign contracts with their selected volunteers following the interview process. The contract would make deployment conditional on training and induction but would ensure that the volunteer could plan on being deployed with relative certainty, and that drop-outs (especially after they have benefitted from EU-funded training) would be reduced. Any change in this area should not reduce the capacity of the EUAV Initiative to train reserve candidate volunteers

When changes to the Regulation are being considered DG ECHO should study whether the project-based recruitment and selection process is optimal. Recruiting to a pool, from which SOs and HOs can select, would reduce timing and could strengthen national contributions (especially in the EU13) by nominating a national organisation to run assessment centres. The idea, and the reasons, are explored further in Annex 5 - Reflections on wording of the Regulation.

3. Deployment:

This section of the case study is based on feedback from the surveys and from the field missions. The field missions found three types of work which deployed volunteers were engaged in:

i. Supporting the HO: often HO staff would have had to be doing the work (e.g. admin, accounting) if volunteers had not arrived. Not every deployment encountered on field missions was sustainable i.e. when the volunteer left the HO staff would be doing the work again.
ii. Training: counter-parting is not the objective of volunteering that it once was, but it still has validity, and many volunteers were finding themselves as trainers or capacity-builders.
iii. Engagement with projects in the field, and direct work with end-beneficiaries.

Overall: Hosting organisations were satisfied with the deployment process (1 dissatisfied out of 16[110]. Only 10% (1) of Sending Organisations would not deploy again with EUAV (20% did not know). The volunteer survey showed that, in most instances, volunteers were overall satisfied with the elements of the process (65% of respondents thought it excellent and good[111], and 25% poor or very poor). However there were six (out of 14) areas where the proportion of satisfied to dissatisfied volunteers was less than 2:1, which means more than 30% of dissatisfied volunteers. There is a chain of action and responsibility which runs from the Regulation through EACEA / DG ECHO to the SOs and the HOs and then to the volunteers: it is thus likely that the volunteers will be the most discontented group, as this summary shows, since processes might be poorly set up or implemented at any stage and still affect them. Nevertheless, in an in-house staff survey this proportion of negative responses would require action by management.

Areas where there were more dissatisfied volunteers than satisfied include: the value of the platform, the level of allowances and whether the job description matched the reality of the project. From interviews it is clear that the Learning and Development process is poorly understood or not used by most participants in deployment contracts.

Negative volunteer comments in the survey focus on the SOs' skills or capacity: poor communication, poor systems. One volunteer notes: "*Sending organization was utterly unprepared to manage deployment,"* And another: *"The reason for rejecting the deployment was the very poor impression of the sending organisation."* 41% of volunteers felt the deployment was not meeting their expectations and 34% that they were not needed or being recognised. The case study focusses more on the areas seen to be working less well, so that changes can be made as appropriate.

Specific areas of concern were:

Allowances: DG ECHO's present use of Numbeo and Expatistan for guidance on country allowances is a sensibly equitable and objective approach with the Member States wishing DG ECHO to work with a basket rather than an existing index.

There is general dissatisfaction amongst the volunteers: in the survey 16 were satisfied[112] with the level of allowances, 39 were not . The volunteers' reaction to allowances during the pilot phase was not quite so negative as this and there may be further lessons from the pilot projects (29% felt they were OK, 36% did not). The volunteers in some countries (or cities, because there is regional variation which the allowance does not cater for) have a hard time surviving on their allowance ('*not really enough for living'*) while some volunteers in remote areas have nothing to spend on and can save. Food inflation is not taken into account, nor is any rise in allowance allocated to volunteers already in the country. SOs and HOs have been supporting volunteers where their

[110] Overall, how satisfied were you / are you with the process for deploying volunteers under EUAV?
[111] Your overall assessment of the volunteering cycle (i.e. the management of your deployment from application to now)
[112] Level of allowance /compensation (compensation package such as travel, monthly allowance, insurance, etc.)

allowance has been too meagre. Volunteers looking at other EUAV vacancies would not apply for some countries because the allowance is low, and lower than other internships or opportunities available.

Transport. There is unanimity among those dealing with transport costs that the present system does not work. There are transport costs included in the allowance, yet there are requirements from SOs to account for them separately. One volunteer spends half a day a week collating his fellow volunteers' travel tickets (25 cents each). One SO did not reimburse volunteers for four months. The paperwork overwhelms HOs (every 25 cent ticket must be itemised). No-one understands what 'transport' covers.

Security Training: In the surveys the volunteers were positive about the relevance of the security training and the quality/relevance of the training. Volunteers interviewed on field missions felt the approach to security had been robust and helpful, and continued to be so with their HOs. The volunteers did report that security training is not well coordinated between EUAV and SOs. During field mission interviews the initial pilot training cycle was not deemed wholly relevant to the (non-emergency) situations almost all volunteers would be going into, and was criticised in various ways (encouraging the isolation of women, associating humanitarian workers with army training)[113]. All SOs provide their own security training – and one volunteer felt the first aid component of that was more relevant than all the initial pilot security training -, and HOs are also giving inductions.

Task descriptions: These have succeeded in attracting well-skilled volunteers and were seen by volunteers as one of the elements which distinguished EUAV from other volunteer schemes.

Some interviewed volunteers found theirs to be generic – but liked this, as it allowed them to show their initiative. 70% of volunteers responding in the survey felt the task assignment matched their skills; 18% did not.

Volunteers were more negative about the task description meeting actual need when they were deployed. In one country visited on a field mission this affected, as the volunteers presented it, 60% of deployments; and while 29% of volunteer survey respondents felt the task description matched the project reality, 37% did not. Only 47% of HOs felt the volunteers were addressing a gap or need (Q29). Often this mis-match is explained by the passage of time and the situation on the ground, or the status of funding for the projects in which the volunteers are to be engaged. One volunteer arrived after the hoped –for funding for a project had been rejected by DG ECHO, another for an approved project submitted after she (and her skills) had been accepted for the deployment. Such mismatches have been well resolved by the flexibility of the HOs and the volunteers *('if [the project] hadn't been accepted we'd have negotiated and been flexible'*) and no volunteer complained about underuse or being asked to do something which didn't use their skills, even if they had had to find their own tasks to do. A few individual volunteers (field mission and survey responses) expressed considerable disgruntlement and one volunteer commented in the survey: "*The EACEA should check if the project proposed by the sending/hosting organization exist, if actually there is the need to send a volunteer and, in case, which are his/her specific competencies related to the project (and not general ones such as in the contract)."*

Duration: The majority of volunteer assignments covered the range of 6 months to 18 months.

The survey responses from volunteers were mixed [114] (53% satisfied, with 40% dissatisfied) but the comments mostly suggest six months is not enough (except for more targeted work likely to be done by Senior Volunteers). 12 months is seen by traditional volunteer-sending organisations (such as VSO) as the minimum recommended period yet, for one volunteer interviewed, *'the first six months will have been more about their self-awareness and self-development and the next six months is likely to be more beneficial for their communities'*.

[113] The training has since been delivered in different locations with different support services for the scenario-based exercise. EACEA, as the contractor for the training services tender, has requested the training consortium to harmonise as far as possible this specific exercise across the different training locations.

[114] Adequacy of the duration of the assignment in respect to the objectives (long enough to reach optimum added value)

Support for the deployed volunteer: 36% of volunteers were positive about the support provided by the HO, 24% were not. For those interviewed in the field motivation and performance was clearly influenced by good or bad management by the HO. Not every volunteer had a mentor, as is required: all comments in the volunteer survey about mentors were negative. Those interviewed in the field wanted induction from, and more involvement with, DG ECHO Field Offices.

45% of volunteers were satisfied, and 32% dissatisfied, with the L&D process. In interviews in Europe and in the field it was clear that most individuals (even in certified organisations which should be able to use the platform to keep track of the assessments and any agreements with the volunteer) were unaware of the full L&D system or/and were not using it. Every SO, and most HOs, have their own performance management system and it has been hard to exclude EUAVs from this, and to expect managers to operate a different system just for EUAVs. Additionally the EUAV platform was only recently functional, was not in French and few HOs were aware of it.

As noted in the summary above, 34% of volunteers did not feel recognised. Examples from the field missions were of volunteers treated as admin assistants by colleagues who hadn't been briefed on their roles, volunteers moved from their assigned task to help the HO catch up with other issues, volunteers feeling they were simply unpaid members of staff e.g. '[I feel I am] *low cost labour to the INGO and professional expert to the local NGO'.*

Conclusions:

- Organisations are generally satisfied with deployments under the EUAV Initiative;
- The dissatisfaction of many volunteers with the present level of allowances suggests that, without change, there may be a drop in future applications by qualified candidates.
- The percentage of volunteers dissatisfied in one way or another is worryingly high, particularly in relation to expectations being met and the recognition they are receiving.
- Security is being given the priority required by the Regulations and this emphasis is appreciated by the volunteers. Some changes will improve the process.
- The gap in timing between needs assessment and deployment (up to 18 months) should be shortened in order to ensure that volunteers are addressing genuine need.
- The Learning and Development system is under-used and poorly understood. SOs' and HOs' views on whether, and how, it is deliverable need to be balanced against the value of the L&D assessments as perceived by the volunteer and required by the Regulations.

Issues to be considered:

1. The system of deciding on allowances needs to be reconsidered as many volunteers are dissatisfied. This may require a change to the Regulation. There is no generic answer (e.g. '10% increase') available from the feedback received. One suggestion is that DG ECHO do spot surveys of deployed or returning volunteers to check accuracy, with SOs allowed to draw down on an approved 'contingency' budget line extra funding for their deployed volunteers if an increase is required and agreed.)
2. The difference between the task description and the reality of the project troubles a good proportion of volunteers. Addressing the timing issue (above) can in part address this, otherwise it would be advisable for the HO and the selected volunteer to come to mutual understanding on the situation, including the flexibility allowed for in the Regulation, before contracts are signed.
3. There needs to be an assessment of the Learning and Development process, and how each stakeholder is using it and deriving value from it. The short-term step is expanding training on what the platform does and doesn't do for the HO, SO and volunteer.

EACEA should be seeking assurance from HOs in the application process that the volunteer will not be replacing a paid role for a local or expat. A number of volunteers, and other observers, feel this is happening. This issue should be raised with all projects during the project kick-off meeting organised by the Executive Agency and a box could be added to the job vacancy process asking SOs, for each individual vacancy, to affirm that no job substitution (duly defined) is involved?

4. 6-month assignments, for junior volunteers particularly, are not seen as likely to be so productive as longer deployments. EACEA's monitoring should consider relative impacts of deployments of different durations.
5. To address concerns about transport, complaining volunteers and HOs offer this recommendation: that day-to-day travel costs, e.g. to and from work, are included in an increased allowance and are not subject to audit, while travel costs related to projects are able to be included separately in a project budget line.
6. DG ECHO should host a meeting to coordinate security training to decide on different levels of training required for different levels of security, and where responsibility for providing that training should best lie. The security budget (which covers only training) should be extended to other items such as phones and SIMs so volunteers can stay in touch; transport into difficult areas; guards for houses in less safe countries.
7. Volunteer surveys need to be undertaken each year – using this year's as a baseline. Disaggregation by SO would be recommended and a session set aside at an annual event for improving areas where volunteers are less satisfied.
8. EACEA should consider publishing or promoting project outputs and deliverables such as Concern Worldwide's booklet on mentoring, to ensure better understanding of such processes and their contribution towards EUAV's objectives.

Annex 9 - Technical assistance and capacity building case study

Introduction

In its Regulation[115] the EU Aid Volunteers Initiative (EUAV) shows three main thematic priorities:

- volunteer deployment,
- technical assistance (TA) and capacity building (CB), and
- support measures.

The present case study provides a review of the TA / CB thematic priority which basically includes two types of organisational capacity building activities available to help achieve the operational objectives of the EUAV Regulation:

- Technical assistance (TA): Activities to strengthen the capacity of Sending organisation (EU based organisations) co-funded by the EUAV Initiative;
- Capacity building (CB): Activities to strengthen the capacity of Hosting organisations (non-EU based organisations) co-funded by the EUAV Initiative.

The technical assistance and capacity building activities are carried out by eligible partners and co-funded by grants which are provided based on annual EUAV calls for proposal. In response to these calls for proposals, consortia of EU-based organisations can apply for technical assistance projects. Consortia of EU based organisations together with Non-EU based organisations can apply for capacity building projects.

The present case study analyses the technical assistance and capacity building activities in general, with some more specific examples (concrete cases) reviewed, presented and discussed.

(Legal) basis

The legal basis for the activities and the listing of eligible activities for capacity building are defined in the EUAV Regulation No 375/2014 articles 8, 10, and 15. The core content is summarised hereunder for better understanding of what is contained and meant by TA / CB in the EUAV context.

Art 8: *The EU Aid Volunteers Initiative shall pursue the objectives referred to in Articles 4 and 7 through the following types of actions:*

-capacity building of hosting organisations;
-ancillary activity that furthers the accountability, transparency and effectiveness of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative.

Art 10 (6) *On the basis of a prior assessment of needs, sending organisations to be certified may benefit from technical assistance aimed at strengthening their capacity to participate in the EU Aid Volunteers Initiative and to ensure compliance with the standards and procedures referred to in Article 9.*

Hosting organisations to be certified may also benefit from the assistance referred to in the first subparagraph in the context of the actions referred to in Article 15.

Art 15 *On the basis of a prior assessment of needs in third countries by sending and hosting organisations or other relevant actors, the Commission shall support actions aimed at strengthening the hosting organisations' capacity for humanitarian aid in order to enhance local preparedness and response to humanitarian crises and to ensure*

[115] Annex 1 of the Regulation 375/2014 establishing EUAV

effective and sustainable impact of the EU Aid Volunteers' work on the ground, including:

(a) disaster risk management, preparedness and response, coaching, training in volunteer management, and other relevant areas for staff and volunteers from hosting organisations;

(b) exchange of best practices, technical assistance, twinning programmes and exchange of staff and volunteers, creation of networks and other relevant actions.

Article 10(6) clearly links the technical assistance and capacity building to the certification process of sending and hosting organisations. While Article 15 of the Regulation provides wider possibilities in terms of capacity building activities for hosting organisations.

The factsheet of DG ECHO on the EUAV [116] Initiative describes the capacity building as follows:

- The Initiative also funds projects submitted by consortia of EU-based and non-EU based organisations that are aimed at strengthening the capacity of non-EU based organisations to prepare and respond to humanitarian crises and to improve their volunteer management.

In the same document technical assistance is described in this way:

- It also provides funding for actions aimed at strengthening the technical capacity of EU-based organisations to comply with the standards and procedures that are required to participate in the EU Aid Volunteers Initiative.

This aligns with the definition in the legal base that technical assistance is directly related to compliance with the standards for sending organisations within the EUAV Initiative, while capacity building has a broader perspective on both volunteer management and humanitarian crisis response (preparation).

Calls for proposals

Since 2015, three calls for proposals have been prepared, always on the basis of an annual work plan, and launched and processed by the Executive Agency EACEA. These calls included both the capacity building and technical assistance components.

The requirements set out in the respective calls for proposal are mostly the same for CB and TA. The differences are:

- The countries where the impact needs to be achieved differ.
- The technical assistance projects focus on impact at European organisation level, while the capacity building projects focus on impact in non-European organisations.
- Capacity building under EUAV funding includes a wider range of eligible activities. These eligible activities include volunteer management improvement, general organisational capacity strengthening and the strengthening of response capacities related to crisis response and disaster risk reduction.

The objectives, as defined in the EUAV calls for proposal, cover both actions lines (CB / TA) as required in the legislation.

Table 16 below shows the objectives for all three calls in the period 2015 – 17:

- In 2015 more objectives are defined when compared to the following years. In addition the calls of 2016 and 2017 include the elements defined in the first call (2015) in the body of the document (in the section *eligible activities* and in the *award criteria* section)
- The one major change from 2015 to the latter is the additional indication of: " Capacity to provide early warning to local communities"

[116] http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/thematic/euaidvolunteers_en.pdf: version June 2017

The call for proposal combines TA and CB, however, when reading the objectives in the call, some specifically target the capacity building call and are not relevant for the technical assistance part: e.g. "strengthening local volunteerism in third countries".

Table 16: Objectives of the calls for proposal for technical assistance and capacity building (2015 – 2017)

2015	2016	2017
Disaster risk management, preparedness and response	Disaster risk management, preparedness and response,	Disaster risk management, preparedness and response;
Strengthening local volunteering in third countries	Strengthening local volunteering in third countries	Strengthening local volunteering in third countries;
Capacities to undergo certification including administrative capacity	Capacities to undergo certification including administrative capacity	Capacities to undergo certification including administrative capacity;
Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD);	Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD)	Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD);
	Capacity to provide early warning to local communities.	Capacity to provide early warning to local communities
Volunteer management according to the standards and procedures for the management of the candidate volunteers and the EU Aid Volunteers;		
Tools and methods of needs assessment at a local level;		
Building partnerships with a view to develop joint projects in the context of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative.		
Communicating the European Union's humanitarian aid principles agreed in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and raise awareness levels and visibility of its humanitarian aid.		

Source: EACEA TA / CB calls for proposal 2015 / 2016 / and 2017

Budget of the calls in the period 2015 – 17 (TA / CB)

The budget allocated for the calls, as stated in the annual work plan and the actual commitment by year is provided in Table 17 below:

- The allocated budget does not significantly change over the years.
- In 2015 and 2016 only a part of the budget was used. In 2015 the proportion is higher, but in that year the call for proposals was also open for two periods of time.
- The amount of the yearly budget allocated to capacity building and technical assistance projects is relevant, as in the annex of the Regulation it is stated that 55% with a permitted variation of +/- 10% of the budget should be allocated to capacity building and technical assistance. However in the annex, the training of volunteers, the costs of apprenticeship placements, and the costs of certification are part of the capacity building

Table 17: Comparison of allocated and committed budget for capacity building and technical assistance projects (2015 – 2017)

Year	Budget allocated in EURO	Budget committed in % of allocated budget
2015	€ 6,98 M	69%
2016	€ 7,97 M	35%
2017	€ 7,60 M	Not yet known[117]

[117] The call is closed and the total requested budget of the applications is higher than the allocated amount of TA / CB (according to an initial response review of EACEA)

Response to the calls

Table 18 below provides the responses to the calls for proposal in 2015 and 2016.

For technical assistance, in total 11 proposals were received of which 7 were granted. From the 4 not granted, 3 were not eligible due to lack of experience of participants in humanitarian aid and/or the number of partners. One proposal scored below the threshold to be funded, and the applicant submitted a revised proposal in a later call which was granted.

For the capacity building in total, 16 proposals were submitted of which 8 were granted. Of the 8 not granted 7 were not eligible, 6 of them due to a lack of experience of participants in the field of humanitarian aid, and 1 due to the number of partners involved not meeting the minimum requirement. One proposal scored below the threshold to be funded, the applicant submitted a revised proposal in the next call for proposals which was granted.

Table 18: Responses to TA / CB calls for proposal in the period 2015 - 2016

Type and year	Applications received	Application rejected	Contracts awarded
Technical Assistance			
2015	7	3	4
2016	4	1	3
Capacity building			
2015	12	6	6
2016	4	2	2

In response to the 2017 call, 24 applications were received for TA / CB but no further information is available to the evaluators. This number of applications is remarkably higher than in 2016

Projects and actors

The accepted proposals show an average co-funding of € 570,000 for technical assistance and € 438,000 for capacity building. While the maximum amount of co-funding is € 700,000. One technical assistance project and 3 capacity building projects received the available maximum co-funding.

The projects are limited to a maximum implementation period of 2 years. The first projects started in September 2015 (2015 call) and the projects funded in 2016 started in the first half of 2017. At present, only one project is finished and delivered its draft final report for review to EACEA.

Table 19: Total funds allocated for TA / CB by type and year in the period 2015 - 2016

Type	Year	Total co-funding by year	Number of projects
Capacity Building	2015	3,303,072	6
	2016	1,259,294	2
	total	**4,562,367**	**8**
Technical Assistance	2015	1,524,642	4
	2016	1,543,730	3
	total	**3,068,373**	**7**

Several applicants are leading on more than one project. In total 11 applicants lead 15 TA & CB building projects, and from the same group, 4 applicants are also leading on 4 deployment projects (of 6 deployment projects in total). Five of those 11 applicants are partners in seven other projects, in addition to being lead applicant of EUAV co-funded projects.

It can be concluded that there are a small number of very active EUAV EU partners implementing the majority of the total funds requested for deployment and TA and CB. This situation was acceptable in the beginning, but should be watched with care to prevent dominant actors influencing the Initiative too much – the evaluation clearly calls for diversity of actors.

Capacity building

In total, 8 capacity building projects, targeting capacity building of non-EU based organisations which could be or become hosting organisations, have been started as a result of the calls for proposal in 2015 and 2016. The total number of non-EU organisations involved in these projects reaches 48.

Of those 48, at present (July 2017) 18 are certified. Two of those 18 organisations were already certified before the actual start of the projects. Overall 77 organisations have reached certification to date, implying that 23% (16 of 77) of the certification can be related to capacity building.

Table 20: Capacity Building – Number of certifications as HO during or after CB activities

	2015	2016 (only new)	Total
Involved organisations in capacity building	*36*	*12*	*48*
Already certified	2	none	2
Certification during or after CB	**16**	**none**	**16**
		Total certified	18

The hosting organisations certified during the capacity building projects are mostly the country offices of an INGO (EU Sending organisations). For example, in a capacity building project led by GVC, during the project 100% of the country offices were certified, while 43% of the independent local partners were certified[118].

From the 8 capacity building projects, three **focused solely on volunteer management,** while five projects had a broader focus, also including non-volunteering related activities.

Those five with a broader focus showed varying proportions of the project activities focused on volunteer management and on improving the resilience of the involved non-EU organisations (from about 10 – 50 %).

In most of the projects, the activities related to volunteer management are stronger on local volunteer management than on international volunteer management. There is only one project fully concentrating on local volunteer management – and none of the projects has a focus limited on international volunteer management.

Table 21: Capacity building projects by main type of activity (2015 – 2016)

Year	Applicant	Project title	Total project value in EURO	Number of third country partners	Volunteer structure related CB activities (Y / N)	Community DRR / Resilience CB include (Y/N)	Estimated % of project-activities in community DRR / Resilience CB
2015	Association	Volinha	825,000	5	Yes	Yes	10%

[118] This is in line with the response during field visits that some of the country directors of INGO's were not fully aware of the certification process of their country office as it was handled by the European HQ.

Year	Applicant	Project title	Total project value in EURO	Number of third country partners	Volunteer structure related CB activities (Y / N)	Community DRR / Resilience CB include (Y/N)	Estimated % of project-activities in community DRR / Resilience CB
	France Vol.						
	Protezione Civile	BE DRIN	544,000	4	Yes	Yes	20%
	GVC	EUAISP	450,000	8	Yes	Yes	33%
	Caritas	PEACH	856,000	7	Yes	Yes	20%
	ICCO	ACTHCB	804,000	5	Yes	Yes	50%
	ADICE	PHASE6	459,000	11	Yes	No	
2016	ADICE	HVM	682,000	9	Yes	No	
	Guilde du Raid	EV4HUO	821,000	3	Yes	No	

Remark: The table above shows roughly estimated percentages of the funds allocated to the DRR activities in the EUAV CB projects: A detailed budget breakdown per activity / result is not available, only per type of staff costs. The estimation is very difficult as major parts of the costs are for staff such as project managers, and breakdowns of those costs are most often not provided in the documentation.

A case study of Capacity building (focus on ICCO)

This case review summarises several capacity building projects in which the partners of the project are selected on the basis of an existing network and existing partnerships. Existing global alliances such as Caritas, or European organisations with non-European country offices, are examples of existing networks which run these projects. Creating new partnerships specifically for the EUAV Initiative is difficult according to the ICCO, as the scale of the projects is quite limited and the efforts of identifying partners and getting to know partners cannot be justified / covered by the EUAV funding.

This case study in addition summarises the majority of the projects in which the European partners opt for a project with the idea to lead or be involved as sending organisation in the years after the TA, which most of them actually did. For example, all deployment projects of 2016 involve partners who are involved in capacity building projects started in 2015.

The identified patterns and links are summarised hereunder:

“ACT for Humanitarian Capacity Development in EU Aid Volunteers initiative” was one of the projects selected for funding in the 2015 call for proposals for capacity building projects. ACT is an international federation of church and faith based NGO’s active in the field of development and humanitarian aid.

The project is led by the Dutch NGO ICCO-Cooperation, and consists of five European members from different countries of the ACT alliance, three associate partners (Universities in the countries of EU participating organisations) and five non-European Members of the ACT alliance (from Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Uganda, Cambodia and the Democratic Republic of Congo).

The non-European partners are each the leading organisation in a country implementation team in which local NGO’s are working together. The total number of local organisations reached by this approach is 64. ICCO has been active in the pilot phase of the Initiative, and for ICCO it was a

logical step to get involved in EUAV right after launch. Until recently, ICCO had deployed volunteers under their own scheme abroad, but due to limited budgets they had to discontinue the deployment through their own scheme

The capacity building project fits very well with the corporate approach of ICCO to strengthen local organisations and to work with them based on identified needs and a common sense of equality. In the context of the EUAV funded project, ICCO and the partners made the choice to combine resilience capacity building and organisational capacity building for volunteer management, including the intention to get partners certified as EUAV hosting organisations for follow up projects. They did not set an objective / target upfront as the goal of the project in terms of number of organisations certified. The main objective was rather to improve the volunteer management capacity of ICCO´s partners.

The project activities were combinations of on-line learning and practical in-country workshops on resilience building, and in country workshops and support on volunteer management. The evaluator can confirm that both lines of activities went well.

Life with Dignity from Cambodia, one of the non-European partners, coordinated the activities in-country. The main challenge for them was the execution of the E-learning in an environment with limited access to the internet and little experience with digital learning. A positive aspect for them was getting EUAV support for the improvement of their own organisation, as in other funding schemes, funding is focused on achieving impact in the communities with very limited possibility to reinforce the capacities of the organisation.

A specific role in the project was given to the universities as associated partners. They contributed to the content development of the courses. A strategic goal of the partnership is to involve them in future projects and recruit online volunteers from the universities (which is now done in a new deployment project also led by ICCO).

During project implementation, achieving certification was the biggest challenge. Direct one on one support of a European project member and full dedication of the hosting organisations was needed to achieve certification.

For the project implementation, ICCO could not fully implement the project with the available budget. The involvement of the HR department, for example, could not be covered by the project budget. As the initiative fits fully with its own approach of ICCO this was not a problem for them.

Opinion of European and non-European organisations on the capacity building projects

Both European and non-European organisations assessed the value of the capacity projects in which they were involved as positive. Survey responses confirmed the positive appreciation on most of the aspects (related ratings above 80% for sending organisations and 100% for hosting organisation).

Less positive feedback was received on the limited budget available related to planned achievements. Both sending organisations and hosting organisations rated this aspect with less than 60% of statements positive. In the interviews with sending originations, the projects were valued for the possibility to strengthen their own organisation, as most other project funding does not provide this opportunity.

Criticism related to the projects focused on the overall administrative burden linked to the project. The volume of administrative requirements compared to the actual size of funding / size of the project, was considered to be unbalanced. A further burden was the limits of the budget for project management and administration (i.e. project overheads).

For the hosting organisations the main criticism was the limited available budget for direct implementation within their organisations. Most of the funds in the projects were used for the activities conducted by personnel from the European organisations, and only a little money was made available for the local organisations' implementation support.

Capacity building of local organisations is seen by some sending organisations as an element contribution to the WHS grand bargain (agenda on localisation): This kind of capacity building helps give a larger responsibility to local organisations in humanitarian aid in the future. But as several other organisations use the funding to reinforce their country-offices, this is not true for most of the projects funded by EUAV.

Technical assistance

In total 7 technical assistance projects concentrated on building or enhancing the volunteer management capacities of EU based organisations – with the overall aim of becoming certified EUAV sending organisations (based on 2015 and 2016 calls for proposal). The total number of organisations involved in these projects is 40, of which (as of July 2017) 14 are certified. Nine of those 14 organisations were already certified before the actual project started.

At present, in total 32 organisations are certified as EUAV Sending Organisations. This implies that 15% (5) of the certifications can be related to capacity building.

Table 22: Technical Assistance – Number of certifications as SO during or after TA activities

	2015	2016 (only new)	Total
Involved organisations in technical assistance	*18*	*22*	*40*
Already certified	6	3	9
Certification during or after TA	**5**	**none**	5
		Total certified	14

All 7 technical assistance projects had their sole focus on volunteer management - varying from a direct focus on making the participating organisation compliant to EUAV requirements, to a general focus on improving the organisations' volunteer management structures.

First TA project completed

The project started in 2015 and was led by Concern Worldwide with partners from the Alliance 2015 network. A copy of the draft final report was provided to one evaluation team member. This project focused on the improvement of the volunteer management amongst the partners of the Alliance 2015 network. An important element of the project was the improvement and the strengthening of the procedures of the involved organisations, to be able to support the selection process and HR management of the selected volunteers. Three of 7 Alliance 2015 members participated directly, but all members have been informed, which resulted in a larger impact through sharing of results. The Alliance network is currently involved in 2 EUAV deployment projects.

A case review of a technical assistance project

Technical assistance projects under EUAV show two distinctive project types. One type of project consists of organisations with more or less equal experience in humanitarian aid and volunteerism who work together to enhance their volunteer management (e.g. Doctors of the World, see below). The other project type are projects in which one or more experienced organisations in international volunteer management work together with less experienced organisations, to help them strengthen their volunteer management capacity. An example of this second type is a TA project led by GVC which started January 2017. GVC and Allianza (Spain) together lead, as experienced organisations,

the TA of 7 other participating EU organisations (6 from EU 13 member states). They share their experience gained in earlier EUAV funded projects with the aim of getting the volunteer management of the involved organisations strengthened and ready for certification.

All TA projects in one or another intend to supporting certification of EU organisations as sending organisations. This has led to the development of tools to support certification by several consortia, which are available for use by organisations outside these consortia, to support their certification processes.

Based on the interviews, there seems to be some duplication between projects as in at least three projects, guidelines for the certification process have been developed separately. At the moment, there is no tool / instrument in place to capture the results of the EUAV projects in order to preventing duplication or allow for wider dissemination (e.g. knowledge base accessible to implementation stakeholders and beyond).

TA project Doctors of the World

In the call for proposals for technical assistance 2016, the project "Developing Technical Structure for aid volunteer MdM" was one of the projects selected for funding. In this project 5 national Doctors of the World organisations (from UK, Spain, The Netherlands, Sweden and Belgium) work together to improve their volunteer management capacity, and to achieve certification to be able to apply for deployment co-funding under the EUAV Initiative.

The five country organisations of MdM are dedicated to provide medical care to vulnerable people who are unable to access health care in third countries as well as in their own country (for example people without insurance, illegal immigrants etc.). All five organisations already work with volunteers, some of them only in their own country, but most of them also abroad. MdM national organisations already have procedures in place for managing volunteers (sending and hosting). The organisations continuously work together in the MdM network to achieve coherence, align their own procedures, and align these with the EUAV Initiative's requirements.

In order to effectively and efficiently adapt to and align with EUAV requirements, MdM national members start with a needs assessment in which an expert assesses the current procedures and identifies the priority fields for improvement. Three of the involved organisations (Spain, UK and Belgium) already successfully applied for EUAV certification.

MdM members see the Initiative as a possibility for extra funding to support their work, and have expressed their intention to apply for deployment funding in the future. However, to stay independent and focused on their specific mission / work they will not cooperate with partners outside their international network.

Opinion of the European organisations on technical assistance

The organisations leading TA projects which were interviewed were all very positive about the availability of the EUAV funding for TA. The possibility of getting funding for internal organisational development / strengthening was seen as something very special as most donors' funding is limited to the funding or activities with direct society / beneficiary impact.

Related to the TA projects, similar criticism was provided, as already documented under the CB part (e.g. the administrative burden based on the requirements of the EUAV Initiative.

Observations related to visibility and communication

In all TA and CB projects, attention is paid to the visibility of the projects. Activities conducted to assure visibility vary from Facebook postings to websites, stands at events, and participation in events / volunteerism related conferences, etc. This certainly helped to raise awareness of the EUAV Initiative and led to information dissemination outside the projects (external communication) – in a way the CB and TA projects are working as ambassadors of EUAV.

However, one field of improvement is to strengthen the alignment of EUAV applicant / project partner communication and the overall communication of DG ECHO. First steps in alignment / cooperation communication are the style guidelines (logo / copy strategy / claims), but more could be done (e.g. formulation of clear targets for the external communication in the calls).

Conclusions and suggestions related to capacity building and technical assistance

- Many of the co-funded projects, delivered tools and guidelines for volunteer management and support of the certification process. At present there is no mechanism in place to collect those results and make them available to other projects. In the calls, there is no requirement outlined to make use of tools and guidelines produced by previous projects, and no attempt is made to mitigate the risk of duplicating work in this respect.
- The effectiveness of capacity building projects and technical assistance with respect to achieving certification as sending or hosting organisation is limited (see Table 21 and Table 22 above for details). For TA in particular, this is remarkable as according to the legislation, TA is explicitly meant for support in achieving EUAV certification.
- As the participants in technical assistance and capacity building projects are overall positive about the impact and usefulness of the projects for themselves, utilising these partners and disseminating their stories as ambassadors of the EUAV provides an opportunity to strengthen the interest and overall acceptance of the Initiative.

  This process could be facilitated by DG ECHO formulating requirements in this respect in the calls for proposal.
- Only a few EU organisations act as core organisations in the field of capacity building and technical assistance. In the process they have acquired considerable expertise with organising projects under EUAV funding which would be very useful to others (and used in the new TA / CB projects as described earlier in the text). In the future however, a greater diversity of actors should be targeted in order to reduce the risk of "monopoly".
- Capacity building of local organisations can contribute to the localisation agenda of the Grand Bargain if the funding becomes more focused on supporting genuine local organisations in future and not predominantly country offices of INGO's as has been the experience to date.

Annex 10 - Certification case study

Introduction

Organisations wishing to send or host volunteers under the EUAV Initiative must normally be certified. The certification process ensures that the high standards and procedures of volunteer management can be fully met by all participating organisations.

As stated in the Regulation N° 375/2014: "A robust certification mechanism is necessary to ensure that sending and hosting organisations comply with the standards laid down in the (Regulation)…Such a certification mechanism should be based on the principles of simplification and non-duplication, differentiation between sending and hosting organisations, cost-effectiveness, transparency and impartiality, encouraging diversity and accessibility ».

Legal basis

The legal framework of the EUAV Initiative is based on 3 Regulations published in 2014, two of which concern certification of sending and hosting organisations:

- Regulation (EU) No 375/2014 of 3rd of April 2014 establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps ("EU Aid Volunteers initiative");
- Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1244/2014 of 20 November 2014 laying down the rules for the implementation of the regulation (EU) No 375/2014

The key Regulation Articles relevant to certification are the following:

Regulation 375/2014, Article 10 Certification mechanism for sending and hosting organisations

1. The Commission shall develop a certification mechanism by means of implementing acts, with the involvement, if appropriate, of humanitarian partners, ensuring that sending organisations comply with the standards and procedures referred to in Article 9, and a differentiated certification mechanism for hosting organisations.

The Commission shall establish the procedure relating to the functioning of the certification mechanisms, building on existing relevant certification mechanisms and procedures, by means of implementing acts. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 26(2).

2. In designing the certification mechanism, the Commission shall seek synergies with the Commission's partnership instruments in the humanitarian field and existing humanitarian standards, with the aim of administrative simplification. The certification mechanism shall be inclusive and non-discriminatory as regards any type of eligible organisation.

3. Sending organisations shall be eligible for certification, if:

(a) they adhere to the standards and procedures referred to in Article 9;

(b) they are active in the field of humanitarian aid as defined in point (d) of Article 3; and

(c) they belong to any of the following categories:

(i) non-governmental not-for-profit organisations formed in accordance with the law of a Member State and whose headquarters are located within the Union,

(ii) public law bodies of a civilian character governed by the law of a Member State,

(iii) non-governmental not-for-profit organisations established in the countries referred to in Article 23 under the conditions laid down in that Article and the agreements mentioned therein,

(iv) public law bodies of civilian character established in the countries referred to in Article 23 under the conditions laid down in that Article and the agreements mentioned therein,

(v) the International Federation of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

4. Organisations in third countries shall be eligible as hosting organisations if:

(a) they adhere to the standards and procedures referred to in Article 9;

(b) they are active in the field of humanitarian aid as defined in point (d) of Article 3; and

(c) they belong to any of the following categories:

(i) non-governmental not-for-profit organisations operating or established in a third country under the laws in force in that country,

(ii) public law bodies of a civilian character governed by the law of a third country,

(iii) international agencies and organisations.

5. Without prejudice to the requirements referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4, sending and hosting organisations may implement actions under the EU Aid Volunteers initiative in association with for-profit private organisations.

6. On the basis of a prior assessment of needs, sending organisations to be certified may benefit from technical assistance aimed at strengthening their capacity to participate in the EU Aid Volunteers initiative and to ensure compliance with the standards and procedures referred to in Article 9.

Hosting organisations to be certified may also benefit from the assistance referred to in the first subparagraph in the context of the actions referred to in Article 15.

7. The Commission shall publish the list of certified sending and hosting organisations in due time after certification.

Implementing Regulation 1244/2014, CHAPTER 9; certification mechanism for sending and hosting organisations

Article 32: **Certification mechanism for hosting organisations**

1. Hosting organisations aspiring for certification shall provide an objective and truthful self-assessment in accordance with the requirements referred to in point 1 of Annex III, assessing

their existing policies and practices against the requirements of the standards and procedures regarding candidate volunteers and EU Aid Volunteers set out in this Regulation and in the Commission Delegated Regulation to be adopted on the basis of Article 9(2) of Regulation (EU) No 375/2014.

2. In the self-assessment, the hosting organisation shall disclose any gaps and areas of need for improvement that may require capacity building in order to reach a full level of compliance.

3. The hosting organisation shall provide with the self-assessment three references in accordance with the requirements set out in point 1 of Annex III to provide comprehensive information on all requirements of the standards and procedures regarding candidate volunteers and EU Aid Volunteers. The references shall be from a minimum of two of the following groups of stakeholders:

(a) A certified sending or hosting organisation with which the applicant hosting organisation has already had, or envisages to set up, a partnership for participation in the EU Aid Volunteers initiative;

(b) A humanitarian aid partner of the Commission with a framework (partnership) agreement in force, with whom the applicant hosting organisation has successfully worked on a humanitarian aid project;

(c) A relevant international organisation or not-for-profit organisation or public law body of a civilian character with which the applicant hosting organisation has successfully worked on a humanitarian aid project;

(d) An accreditation or auditing organisation that has certified the applicant hosting organisation in areas relevant for the EU Aid Volunteers initiative, in which case the relevant accreditation or auditing documents should also be provided.

4. The completed self-assessment shall be signed by the person empowered to represent and legally bind the hosting organisation and sent, together with the references referred to in paragraph 3, to the Commission.

5. Based on the self-assessment and the references, the Commission shall assess the application and may take one of the following decisions:

(a) To award certification in cases where the applicant hosting organisation is assessed as fully compliant with the requirements of the standards and procedures;

(b) Not to award certification in cases where the applicant hosting organisation does not fully comply with the requirements of the standards and procedures.

6. Within six months of receipt of the application, the Commission shall inform the applicant hosting organisation about the outcome of the certification, specifying also opportunities for capacity building support, if needed, with a view to re-submitting an application. In case there are any identified needs to be met based on a strategy for capacity building to be provided by the applicant hosting organisation, the latter shall be eligible and have priority for capacity building support.

Article 33: **Certification mechanism for sending organisations**

1. Sending organisations aspiring for certification shall provide an objective and truthful evidence-based self-assessment in accordance with the requirements referred to in point 2 of Annex III, assessing their existing policies and practices against the requirements of the standards and procedures regarding candidate and EU Aid Volunteers.

2. In the evidence-based self-assessment, the sending organisation shall disclose any gaps and areas of need for improvement that may require technical assistance in order to reach a full level of compliance. It shall also enclose sample evidence and means of verification that the policies and practices referred to in each of the requirements of the standards and procedures are implemented, particularly in relation to volunteers.

3. The completed evidence-based self-assessment shall be signed by the person empowered to represent and legally bind the sending organisation and sent, together with the accompanying documents referred to in paragraph 2, to the Commission.

4. Based on the evidence-based self-assessment and the accompanying documents provided, the Commission shall assess the application and may take one of the following decisions:

(a) To award certification in cases where the applicant sending organisation is assessed as fully compliant with the requirements of the standards and procedures;

(b) Not to award certification in cases where the applicant sending organisation does not fully comply with the requirements of the standards and procedures.

5. Within six months of receipt of the application, the Commission shall inform the applicant sending organization about the outcome of the certification, specifying also opportunities for technical assistance, if needed, with a view to re-submitting an application. In case there are any identified needs to be met based on a strategy for technical assistance to be provided by the sending organisation, the latter shall be eligible and have priority for technical assistance.

Comments on the legal basis

According to Regulation 375/2014 (art 9), it is up to the Commission (DG ECHO) to "establish standards and procedures covering the necessary conditions, arrangements and requirements to be applied by sending and hosting organisations…building on existing relevant practices". Article 10 further specifies that "In designing the certification mechanism, the Commission shall seek synergies with the Commission's partnership instruments (note: FPA, FAFA) in the humanitarian field and existing humanitarian standards, with the aim of administrative simplification".

This objective of simplification is confirmed in the preamble (12) of the Implementing Regulation 1244/2014: ***"…such a certification mechanism should be based on the principles of simplification and non-duplication…".***

On the above basis, DG ECHO is authorized in principle to define an administratively straightforward and non-duplicating certification process for FPA and FAFA members.

The Regulation 1244/2014 (Art 32.6) also mentions that the certification process is allowed to take up to 6 months before informing the applicant – which may appear protracted for a process that is supposed to be simplified and non-duplicating, but still appropriate as the applicants need first to be legally registered in their countries of origin (see procedure below).

Certification procedure

The procedure of certification which as stated, can take up to 6 months in total, includes the following steps:

- An open call is valid until September 2020.
- The tenderers must send self-assessment by mail.
- Receipt of the self-assessment must be confirmed by EACEA.
- The EACEA must check that tenderer is registered with a PIC n° (Personal identification code) legally in its country of origin; this is a general code for all EC. PIC registering is a rapid process in the EU, but it can take up to 6 months in other countries, as national legal documents must be officially translated.
- The tender is assessed by 1 external evaluator (expert in humanitarian aid and in evaluation), contracted by EACEA.
- If the evaluator has questions, he/she contact EACEA, who asks the tenderer.
- The evaluator gives the comments regarding the application content and indicates whether the organisation should or not be certified.
- When the external evaluation is completed, the tender is submitted to an evaluation committee comprising DG ECHO and 2-3 EACEA staff. This committee gathers 6-7 times/year and reviews eligibility and all criteria.
- An official notice of certification is sent to the tenderer.

All the criteria are equally important for certification:

- Duty of care, security.
- Equal opportunities and non-discrimination.
- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- Health and safety.
- Data protection (personal data).

On all these issues, policies must be in place and lists of supporting documents are mandatory for sending organisations (indicative only for hosting ones).

Two simplification measures are applied for FPA and FAFA members:

- No need to prove that they work in HA.
- Documents about equal opportunity, non-discrimination, protection of children, vulnerable adults and sexual abuse are not required.

If tenderers already use volunteers, this is considered as an "added value" to the bid. According to EACEA, the main problem is arguably to be found among hosting organisations – not sending ones. This assumption is however not in accordance with the findings collected from interviews and surveys, which confirm that sending organisations tend to consider the certification process as more difficult than the hosting ones (who are often national branches of international NGOs and are therefore assisted by the head offices in this process).

Statistics from EACEA indicate that to date:

- 1 applicant has been refused (a sending organization) due to its inadequate security policy (it may re-submit later)
- 2 hosting organisations have abandoned the process.

Number of certified organisations

At the time of the drafting of this report (August 2017), 33 sending organisations (SO) and 108 hosting organisations (HO) have been certified by EUAV. The number of new SO registrations has remained stable (and rather low) in 2016 and 2017 (10 each year) after a small peak of 13 the first year (2015). At the opposite, the number of certified HOs is increasing steadily, from 52 in 2016 to already 49 in September 2017.

Nevertheless, the above figures are still below the expectations in DG ECHO's work plans:

- Work plan 2015: by the end of that year, 100 organisations were expected to be certified or working on the certification process (against 20)
- Work plan 2016: 140 new applications would be evaluated (62 SO and HO were certified in 2016)

Comparison between EUAV and FPA certification processes

As discussed in the report (EQ 2 and 4), a key reason for the low number of FPA and FAFA implementing partners of DG ECHO who are certified by EUAV is the negative perception of "duplication" (as expressed by the stakeholders) between the two systems, and the high expected transaction costs of the EUAV certification process compared to the relatively low expected financial and impact benefits. Given this perspective, the requirements of the two certification systems (self-assessment forms) are compared below to the extent possible, to assess the level of duplication that might be contrary to the spirit of Regulation 375/2014.

Until EUAV, to become a humanitarian partner of the European Commission, organisations must apply for a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA). FPAs may be concluded between the Commission and the organisations either under the Humanitarian Aid Regulation (HAR) or under the Emergency Support Regulation (ESR). In both cases, partners are selected based on specific criteria and legal and financial requirements, as well as quality standards. This helps ensure that partnerships are of value to both the European Commission and the applying organisation.

Several versions of FPAs have been concluded under the Humanitarian Aid Regulation (HAR) since 1993 until 2014 (5th version). NGOs can apply for the signature of the 2014 HAR FPA with DG ECHO if they comply with the criteria established under the HAR, the Financial Regulation and on the basis of its Rules of application. The selection criteria consist of the eligibility and suitability criteria, as listed in the extensive qualification questionnaire (33 pages). All statements must be supported by documents to be attached to the on-line questionnaire.

It is the opinion of the evaluation team that:

- the FPA application questionnaire that is still to be found on DG ECHO's website is dated 13/02/2015 and requires some updating. For example, the questionnaire still refers to the "People In Aid code of good practice in the management and support of aid personnel" which has since been merged in the Core Humanitarian Standards);
- the EUAV certification process is fully consistent in all its details with the provisions of the EUAV Regulation, whilst the FPA questionnaire is following its own logic in which volunteers are only one of many elements. The need to prepare a certification questionnaire to specifically train and protect volunteers to be deployed under EUAV is therefore quite understandable.
- Nevertheless, as in the EUAV questionnaire, the concern and commitment to good people management in the FPA –including volunteers but not specifically for them only - appears clearly. This is confirmed e.g. in the points 12-22 of the FPA application questionnaire, which deal with staff and "the provision of fair working conditions of humanitarian workers, volunteers or salaried, with special attention to: their safety in the field, professional development and training, equal opportunity, staff grievances, wrongdoing, staff evaluations and reviews…". The lack of details may be justified by the fact that FPA was intended solely for highly professional and experienced humanitarian organisations.

The table below tends to support the statements made by every humanitarian partner interviewed, i.e. that the FPA certification requires already the same assurances as EUAV, but in a different order, and with much less specific provisions relevant to volunteers.

Table 23: Comparison between FPA and EUAV self-assessment form (source: DG ECHO, EACEA)

FPA certification requirements (out of basic data on applicant)	EUAV certification requirements (out of basic data on applicant)	Remarks

Sections IV and V.1 of the application questionnaire Compliance of legal status and eligibility (type of organisation, official registration, not subject to legal actions)	Section II eligibility:
	- type of organization,
	- apply standards and procedures of Reg 375/ Art 9:
	  - procedures for pre-deployment
	  - field supervision
	  - insurance
	  - duty of care
	  - monitoring
	  - Active in humanitarian aid	

Section V.2.1. Administrative capacity: 1. formal supervisory body 2. segregation of duties between depts. (finance, HR, project management, procurement) 3. formal process for reviewing organisational structure 4. formal policy for record keeping and docs management at HQ 5. procedures in place to safeguard docs in volatile environments 6. procedures in place for management to override established internal controls 7. previous implementation of EU-funded projects 8. audits made over the past 3 years by EU, EEA, states… 9. approved strategic plan 10. evaluation of strategic plan 11. risk assessments of organizational, financial, operational risks 12. clause of conflict of interest in staff contracts 13. communication with staff: intranet, newsletter 14. staff policy statement, personal charter 15. specific provisions in staff policy/charter on equal opportunity, grievance, training, wrongdoing, staff evaluation, working conditions 16. upload the above documents 17. code of conduct, ethics for staff 18. code includes sexual exploitation or abuse, child protection	Sections III and IV Standards and Procedures Item 13. Performance management (procedures, objectives, reviews) Item 6. Data protection Item 1. Duty of care, safety and security; 5. Health and safety Item 17. Integrity and code of conduct Items 2. Equal opportunities, non-discrimination; 17. Integrity and code of conduct; 15. Working conditions; 10. Training; 11 Induction; 12. Apprenticeship; 8. Task assignment; 3. Professional and social recognition Item 17. Integrity and code of conduct Item 4. Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	

FPA certification requirements (out of basic data on applicant)	EUAV certification requirements (out of basic data on applicant)	Remarks
19. upload the above documents 20. subscribe to **People In Aid code of good practice in management of aid personnel.** This covers 7 principles which **include aspects for volunteers**: I. Human resources strategy II. Staff policies and practices III. Support, management and leadership IV. Consultation and communication V. Recruitment and selection VI. Learning, training and development VII. Health, safety and security 21. safety for field staff or visiting HQ staff: health / repatriation insurance, emergency evacuation 22. security assessments and protocols (security plans and SOPs in place) to protect staff in dangerous environments 23. training of staff on security measures (e.g. HEST) 24. security architecture (HQ and field levels) 25. actions taken to prevent loss of institutional knowledge due to staff turnover 26. Fraud and corruption prevention policy, including whistle-blowing policy 27. Above policies are only statement of no-tolerance, or include formal guidance 28. List of Board members with duties 29. HQ organizational chart with n° of full-time equivalent staff and names of managers (**NOT VOLUNTEERS**) 30. List of field offices	Item 14. Living conditions Item 15. Working conditions (allowances, accommodation, health and safety, travel) Item 16. Contract with volunteers (deployment) Item 9. Identification and selection Item 8. Volunteer task assignment Items 10. Learning and development, 11. Induction, 12. Apprenticeships; 3. Professional and social recognition Items 1. Duty of care, safety and security; 18. Debriefing of volunteers; 5. Health and safety; 15. Working conditions / safety; 10. Learning and development As above As above Item 6. Data protection Item 17. Integrity and code of conduct	FPA needs to be revised as the People in Aid Code has not been updated since 2003 and has been merged in the Core Humanitarian standards If still valid, EUAV should accept this Code for FPA partners
V.2.2 Financial capacity 1. Last certified accounting period 2. Approved external audit firm 3. Date of signature of last audit report 4. Opinion of external auditors 5. Reasons for above		

FPA certification requirements (out of basic data on applicant)	EUAV certification requirements (out of basic data on applicant)	Remarks
6. Scope of audit 7. Currency used in accounts 8. Accounting method 9. Balance sheet – assets 10. Funds for projects still to be received in assets 11. Liabilities in balance sheet 12. Liabilities for projects 13. Profit and loss account 14. Percentage of operating incomes from EC 15. Upload balance sheet 16. Upload audit opinion 17. Upload translation of above 18. Upload entire audit report 19. Second-to-last accounting period data		
v.2.3 Technical and logistical capacity 1. Adherence to SPHERE 2. If not, reasons 3. Other quality standards 4. Use of PCM 5. If not, reasons 6. Needs assessment method 7. Identification and selection of projects 8. Progress report from field to CO to HQ 9. Comparison of initial proposal with actual 10. Post distribution monitoring 11. Regular evaluations, implementation of recommendations 12. Individual projects evaluated or audited by EU, EEA, states over past 3 years 13. Reports of above 14. Reference letters from other donors 15. Upload above docs 16. Upload procurement procedures		

FPA certification requirements (out of basic data on applicant)	EUAV certification requirements (out of basic data on applicant)	Remarks
V.2.4 Proven experience in the humanitarian field 1. Operating expenses in past 3 years 2. List of humanitarian projects in past 3 years 3. Annual activity reports of past 3 years 4. Operating expenses per ECHO sector (food, WASH, health…) 5. Other sectors		Not required in EUAV for FPA
V.2.5 Humanitarian coordination 1. Role in coordination 2. If not, reasons		
V.2.6 Field work 1. implementing partners 2. formal written agreement with IPs 3. monitoring of IPs 4. financial control of IPs 5. Procurement of IPs 6. Names of IPs 7. Certified by HAP for accountability to beneficiaries 8. If not, AAP procedures 9. If not, complaints procedures by beneficiaries	Section IV, item 7.partnership (agreement, control, ethics)	
V.2.7 Code of Conduct 1. Adherence to Red Cross code (10 principles) 2. Adherence streamlined in internal procedures 3. Monitoring of implementation of 4 humanitarian principles		

Conclusions

The EUAV certification approach is fully consistent with the EUAV Regulation 375/2014, which is not entirely the case for the FPA questionnaire – as the latest follows its own logic dedicated to the matching with the Humanitarian Aid Regulation of highly professional humanitarian actors for whom volunteers are only one element among many. The EUAV certification furthermore provides the opportunity for new humanitarian organisations – not yet registered into FPA and perhaps not acceptable either to the FPA requirements – to enter into a fruitful cooperation with DG ECHO.

Nonetheless, the FPA certification contains - in another sequence and with much less details as it makes itself reference to external documents such as the People in Aid Code - most of the elements required also by EUAV.

Incidentally, the analysis points also to the need for the FPA certification questionnaire, which dates back to early 2015 – to be reviewed and adapted, as e.g. the People in aid Code is not anymore applied as such and has been merged in 2015 within the Core Humanitarian standards.

There is therefore an argumented case for a new comparative assessment of both – EUAV and FPA – certification questionnaires, in order to possibly avoid redundancy of efforts and aim at administrative simplification, as intended in the Regulation 375/2014.

Issue to be considered

- To consider a new comparative assessment between the EUAV and FPA certification procedures; this assessment should be coordinated with the possible revision of the FPA certification, which may itself help bridging the gap between the two mechanisms.

Annex 11 - Stakeholder Surveys – Results

Altogether, 6 targeted surveys were prepared in the context of the evaluation. The surveys were closed on 15th September 2017. The number of responses at closing time is presented in the table hereunder.

ID	Target group	Responses and response rate	Remark
1	**DG ECHO FPA partner (INGOs)** (not engaged in EUAV / not having participated in pilot projects as lead or partner)	13 (8%)	Web based (about 168 invitees)
2	***Partners in the pilot phase*** *(not yet engaged in EUAV)*	*2* *(8%)*	*Web based* *(24 organisations)*
3	**EUAV European Partners / Actors** (all EU organisations, certified, having received TA, partners providing specific TA, etc.)	18 (55%)	Web based (33 organisations)
4	**EUAV Hosting Organisations**	23 (31%)	Web based (about 74 invitees)
5	**EUAV Volunteers** **(trained about to be deployed, apprentice, deployed, returned)**	88 (63%)	Web based (about 140 invitees) EACEA invited and conducted the follow-up.
6	**Member States representatives** **(HAC / COHAFA / ProCIV)**	18 Representing 27 members (8 HAC, 13 COHAFA, and 6 ProCIV)	DG ECHO invited and conducted the follow-up "Paper based survey – MS Word File" to be returned by E-Mail

The results of the different surveys are presented hereunder; findings in the body of the evaluation report often refer to the survey results of five surveys presented in this annex. The responses to the pilot project survey were so few that presenting the results adds no value.

11.1 Survey for EUAV Volunteers

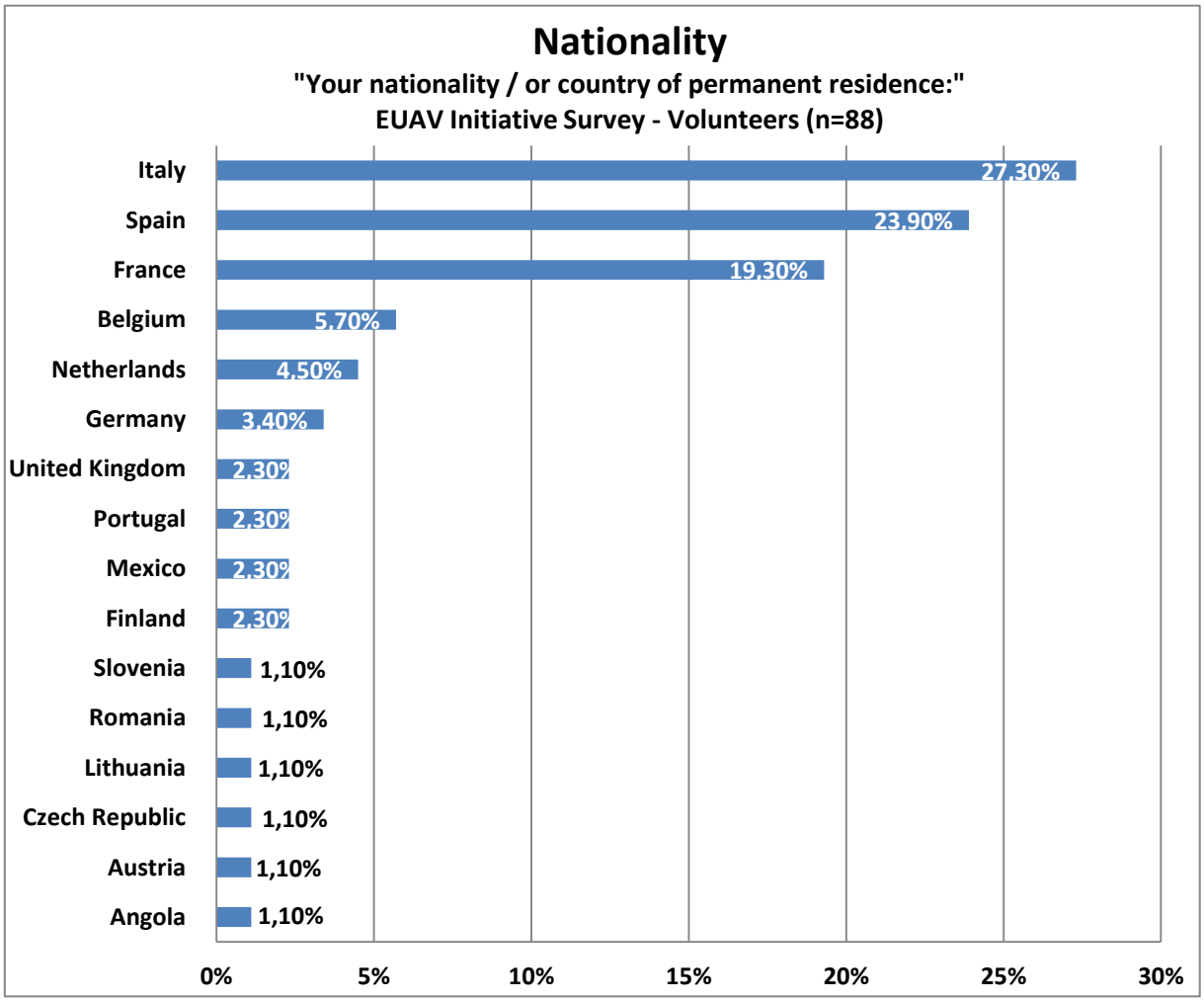
Responses to the survey

EACEA invited about 140 volunteers and the survey attracted altogether 88 volunteers to respond, representing a response rate of about 63%. The response rate is the highest amongst the targeted surveys and looking through the responses, the evaluation team see many of the findings of field missions and interviews with volunteers and project partners confirmed. Furthermore, when comparing the population variables of the responses with the population basis data it get obvious that they align quite well so that the quality and solidity of survey data can be confirmed. All in all, the data build a solid basis of information about the perception of the volunteers.

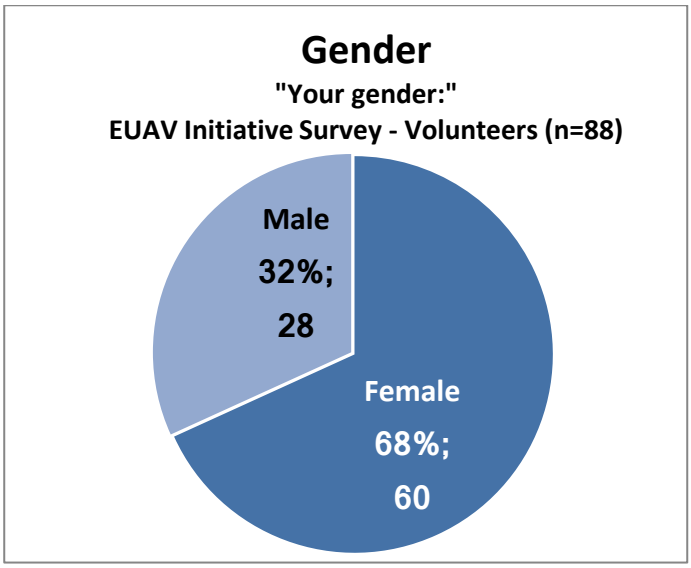
Important remark: The number of respondents (n) varies as sometimes no answer was provided by a respondent in relation to a specific item. Discrepancies between the result figures and the number of respondents occur because there were items for which multiple responses were possible.

Population Variables

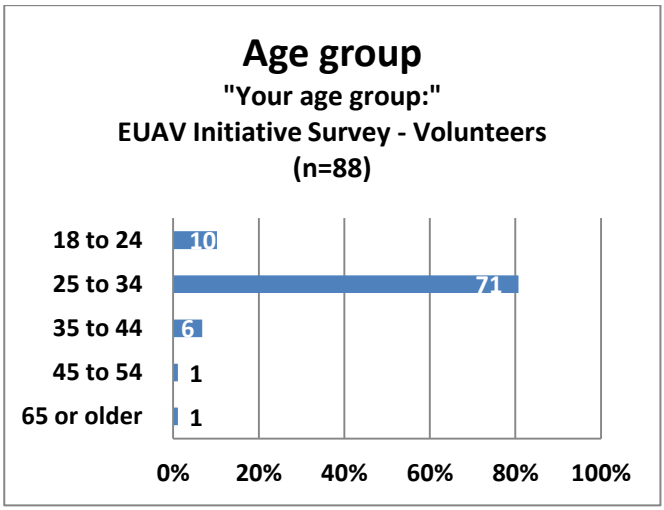
Nationality of respondents



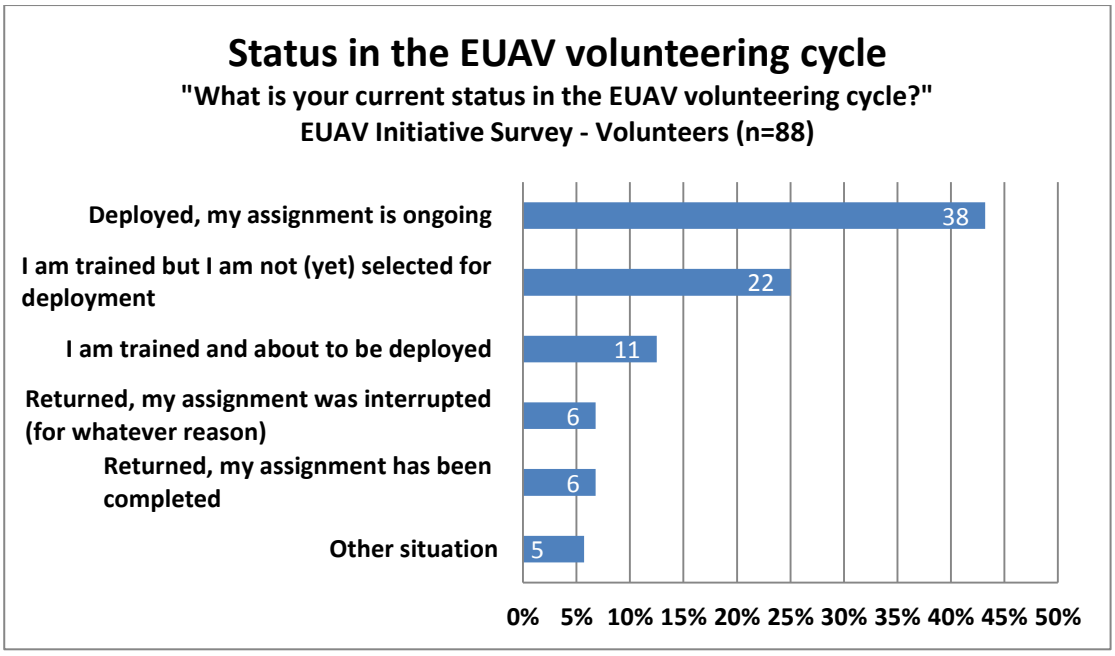
Gender



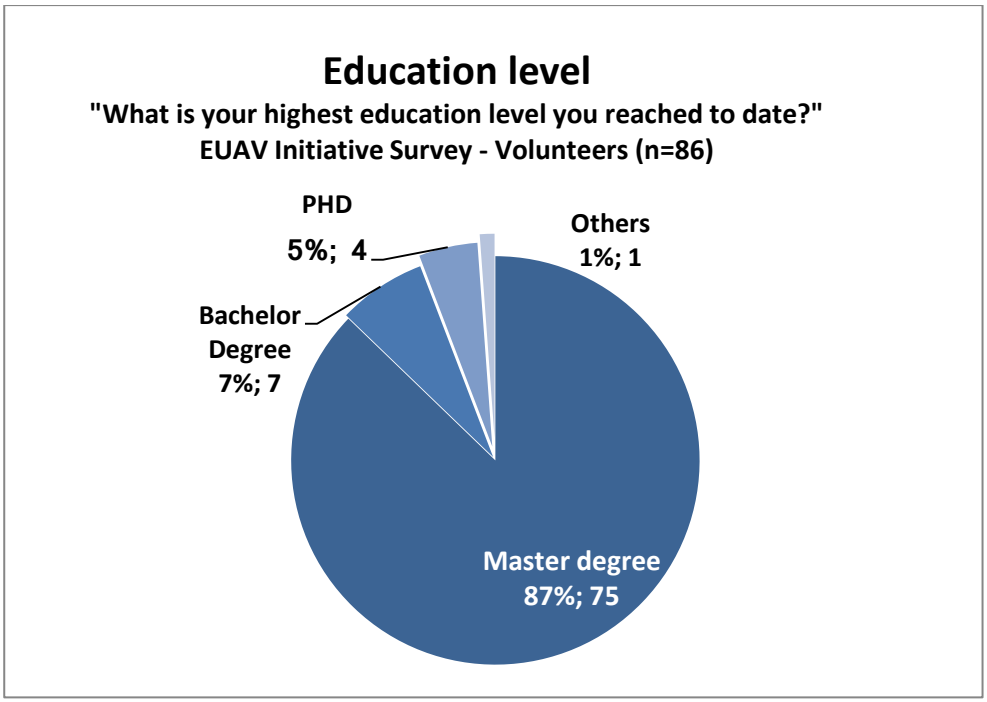
Age group



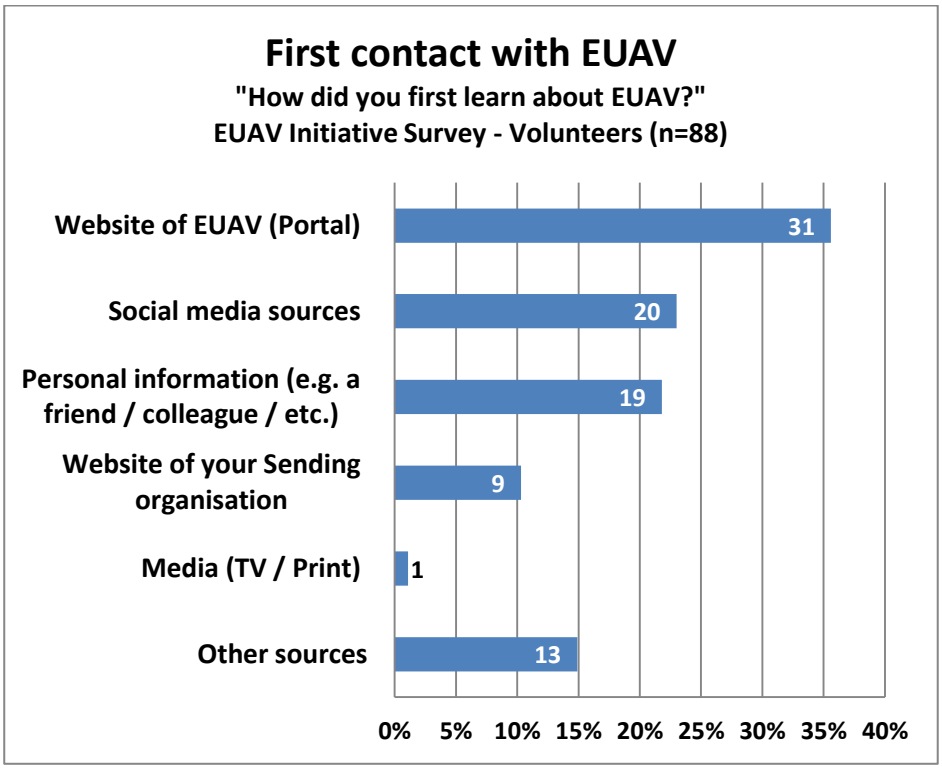
Status in the EUAV volunteering cycle



Education level

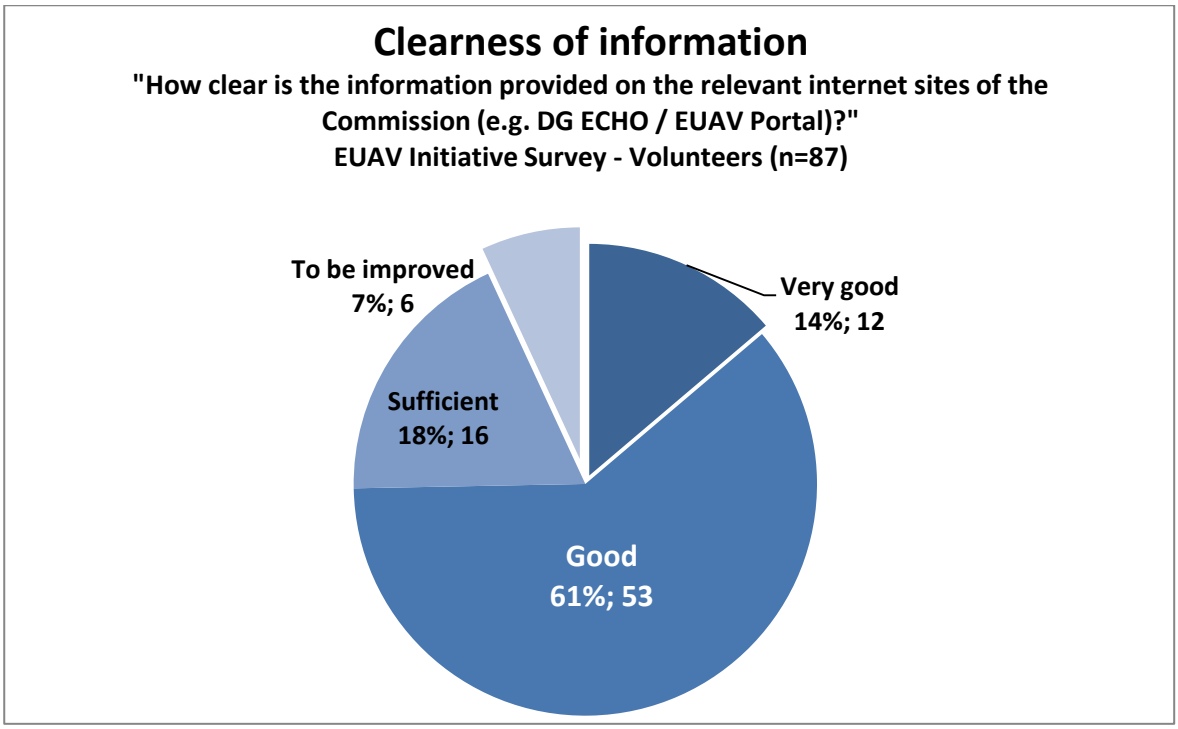


First contact with EUAV

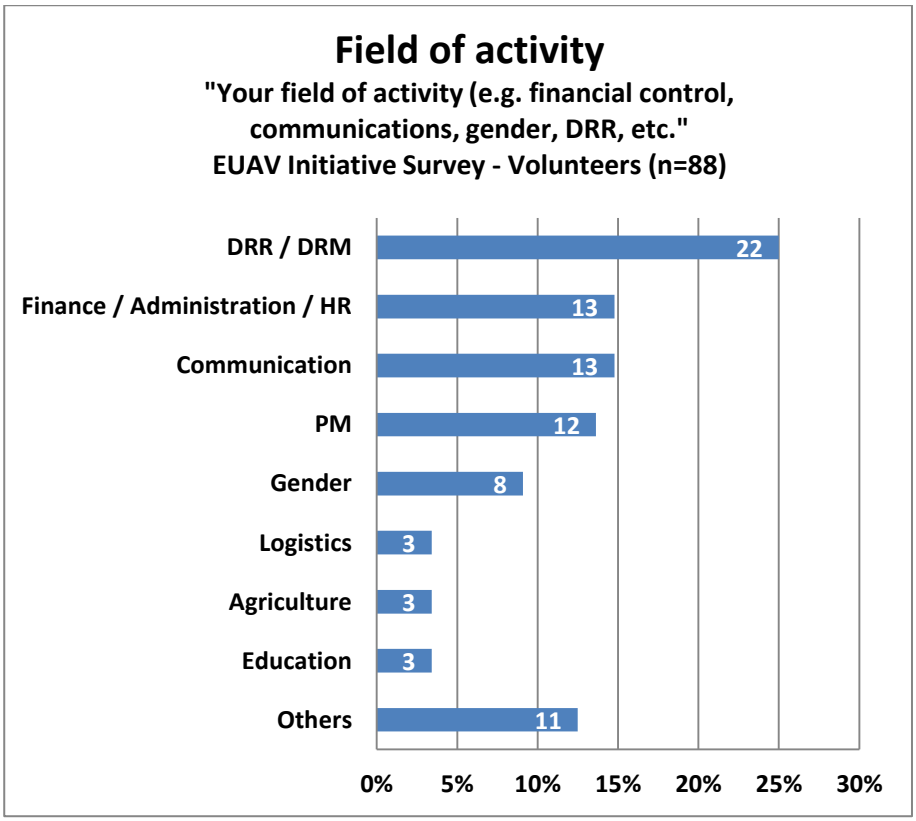


Remark: multiple answers possible

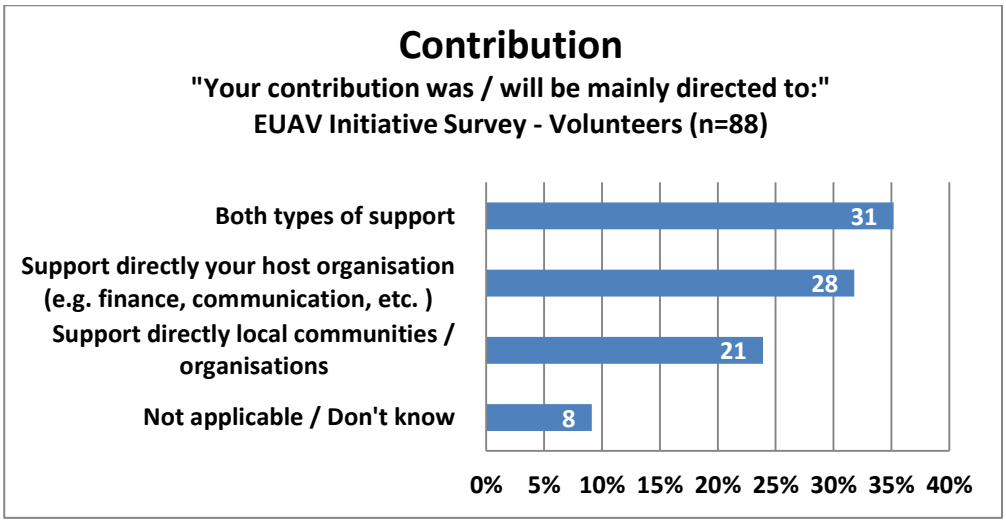
Clearness of information



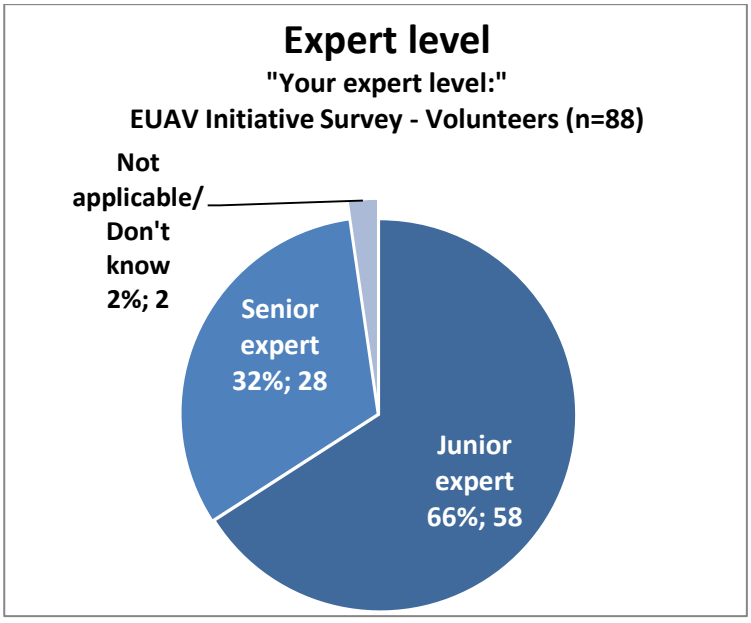
Field of activity



Contribution



Expert level



Motivation for engagement

Why did you apply to volunteer through EUAV? Please rate replies by importance:

	Very important	Important	Very important & important	Of little importance	Responses
To help people in need	69	19		0	88
	78,40%	21,60%	***100,00%***	0,00%	
To gather work experience	56	29		3	88
	63,60%	33,00%	***96,60%***	3,40%	
To transfer my knowledge to others	43	33		12	88
	48,90%	37,50%	***86,40%***	13,60%	
To develop specific skills (e.g. languages)	47	30		10	87
	54,00%	34,50%	***88,50%***	11,50%	
To explore career development opportunities	47	33		8	88
	53,40%	37,50%	***90,90%***	9,10%	
To develop my career in the humanitarian field	64	21		2	87
	73,60%	24,10%	***97,70%***	2,30%	

Overall assessment of the volunteering cycle

From your personal perspective and experience with your volunteering assignment under EUAV, please rate the following:

	Excellent	Good	Excellent & Good	Poor	Very poor	Poor & Very poor	Responses
Your overall assessment of the volunteering cycle (i.e. the management of your deployment from application to now)	9	47		18	3		77
	11,69%	61,04%	***72,73%***	23,38%	3,90%	***27,27%***	

Evaluation of the volunteering cycle

	Excellent	Good	Excellent & Good	Poor	Very poor	Poor & Very poor	Responses
Information on the assignment (e.g. job description / requirements) matched my skills	14	46		11	4		75
	18,67%	61,33%	***80,00%***	14,67%	5,33%	***20,00%***	
Information on the assignment (e.g. job description / requirements) matched the project reality	3	21		21	11		56
	5,36%	37,50%	***42,86%***	37,50%	19,64%	***57,14%***	
Recruitment and selection process by my sending organisation	14	42		15	11		82
	17,07%	51,22%	***68,29%***	18,29%	13,41%	***31,71%***	
Quality and adequacy of training (general residential training and prior on-line preparation organised for all candidate volunteers by EUAV)	29	46		7	1		83
	34,94%	55,42%	***90,36%***	8,43%	1,20%	***9,64%***	
Quality and adequacy of induction/training organised by the sending organisation	10	33		12	7		62
	16,13%	53,23%	***69,35%***	19,35%	11,29%	***30,65%***	
Training and preparation for the assignment matched to the requirements for the deployment	8	26		17	9		60
	13,33%	43,33%	***56,67%***	28,33%	15,00%	***43,33%***	
Support provided by the sending organisation before, during and after the assignment	13	20		11	11		55
	23,64%	36,36%	***60,00%***	20,00%	20,00%	***40,00%***	
Support provided by the hosting organisation, before and during my assignment	6	24		13	8		51
	11,76%	47,06%	***58,82%***	25,49%	15,69%	***41,18%***	
Usefulness of EUAV platform for the implementation of the assignment (volunteer area / forum / etc.)	4	20		29	5		58
	6,90%	34,48%	***41,38%***	50,00%	8,62%	***58,62%***	
Level of allowance / compensation (compensation package such as travel, monthly allowance, insurance, etc.)	3	13		24	16		56
	5,36%	23,21%	***28,57%***	42,86%	28,57%	***71,43%***	
Clarity of the terms and conditions of your EUAV assignment (e.g. contract, security protocol)	5	39		12	10		66
	7,58%	59,09%	***66,67%***	18,18%	15,15%	***33,33%***	
Usefulness of the learning and development plan and process	6	33		18	9		66
	9,09%	50,00%	***59,09%***	27,27%	13,64%	***40,91%***	
The level and relevance of security training – before deployment	18	43		11	0		72
	25,00%	59,72%	***84,72%***	15,28%	0,00%	***15,28%***	
The level of awareness from the hosting organisation in regard to your safety – during deployment	13	32		3	8		56
	23,21%	57,14%	***80,36%***	5,36%	14,29%	***19,64%***	

Evaluation of the volunteering assignment

	Excellent	Good	*Excellent & Good*	Poor	Very poor	*Poor & Very poor*	Responses
Degree of personal satisfaction with the volunteering assignment	8	24		13	1		46
	17,39%	52,17%	***69,57%***	28,26%	2,17%	***30,43%***	
Duration of the assignment in respect to your personal requirements /preferences / availability	11	26		7	2		46
	23,91%	56,52%	***80,43%***	15,22%	4,35%	***19,57%***	
Adequacy of the duration of the assignment in respect to the objectives (long enough to reach optimum added value)	8	18		17	2		45
	17,78%	40,00%	***57,78%***	37,78%	4,44%	***42,22%***	
Level to which you could contribute to the capacity development of the host organisation	6	27		9	0		42
	14,29%	64,29%	***78,57%***	21,43%	0,00%	***21,43%***	
Quality of contacts and exchange with local volunteers and staff during the assignment	6	23		11	2		42
	14,29%	54,76%	***69,05%***	26,19%	4,76%	***30,95%***	
Quality of contacts and exchange with hosting organisation	4	26		10	5		45
	8,89%	57,78%	***66,67%***	22,22%	11,11%	***33,33%***	
Matching of your expertise and knowledge with the requirements of the project / the actual local needs	11	19		12	3		45
	24,44%	42,22%	***66,67%***	26,67%	6,67%	***33,33%***	
Degree to which the volunteering assignment met the expectations you had before deployment	7	17		16	4		44
	15,91%	38,64%	***54,55%***	36,36%	9,09%	***45,45%***	
Feeling of being needed and recognised during your volunteering assignment	9	19		11	6		45
	20,00%	42,22%	***62,22%***	24,44%	13,33%	***37,78%***	

Relevance of the EUAV Initiative

Overall, I consider that the EUAV Initiative is very relevant for:

	Fully agree	Agree	Fully agree & Agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Fully disagree	Slightly disagree & Fully disagree	Responses
My career ambitions in the humanitarian sector	15	23		7	1	2		48
	31,25%	47,92%	***79,17%***	14,58%	2,08%	4,17%	***6,25%***	
My personal development	20	24		2	2	0		48
	41,67%	50,00%	***91,67%***	4,17%	4,17%	0,00%	***4,17%***	
Solidarity between European citizens and people in my host community	8	24		12	2	2		48
	16,67%	50,00%	***66,67%***	25,00%	4,17%	4,17%	***8,33%***	
Addressing the real needs of people in my host community	10	24		8	2	3		47
	21,28%	51,06%	***72,34%***	17,02%	4,26%	6,38%	***10,64%***	

Added value at personal level

Please rate the following statements with respect to impact and added value at a personal level:

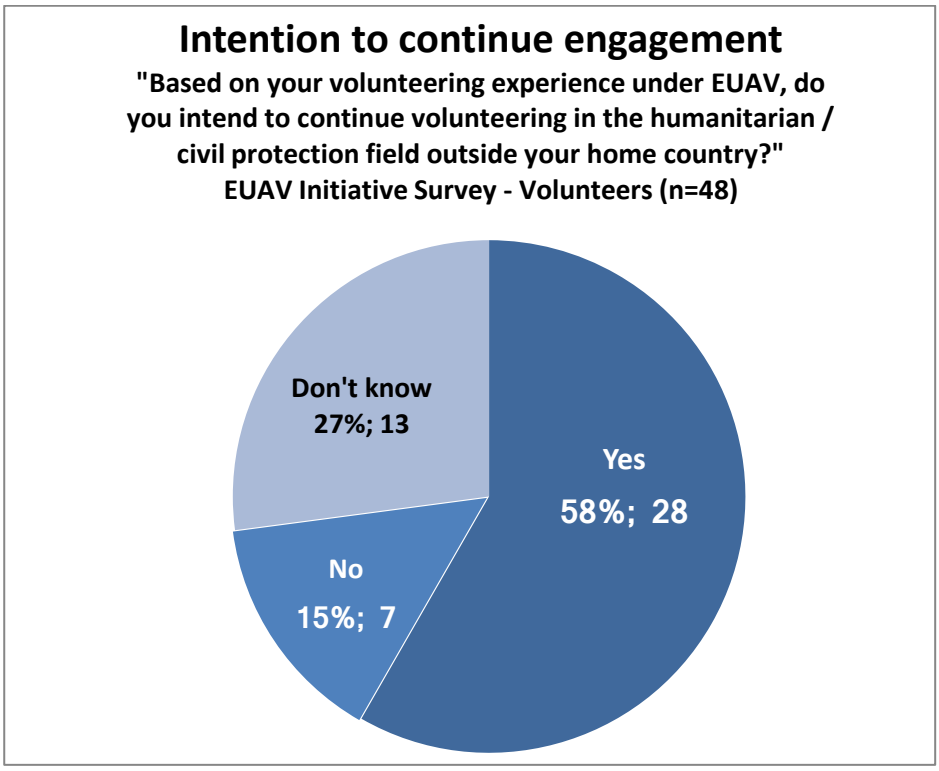
	Fully agree	Agree	Fully agree & Agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Fully disagree	Slightly disagree & Fully disagree	Responses
I feel that my presence as a volunteer is relevant and makes a clear difference	7	13		12	5	6		43
	16,28%	30,23%	***46,51%***	27,91%	11,63%	13,95%	***25,58%***	
The assignment contributes to my personal enrichment (development)	16	23		3	3	2		47
	34,04%	48,94%	***82,98%***	6,38%	6,38%	4,26%	***10,64%***	
The assignment contributes to my career development	12	18		11	4	1		46
	26,09%	39,13%	***65,22%***	23,91%	8,70%	2,17%	***10,87%***	
The volunteering experience motivates me to possibly continue volunteering in third countries	8	14		13	8	4		47
	17,02%	29,79%	***46,81%***	27,66%	17,02%	8,51%	***25,53%***	
The assignment makes me feel part of an important initiative and I share its identity	10	18		7	8	4		47
	21,28%	38,30%	***59,57%***	14,89%	17,02%	8,51%	***25,53%***	

Impact and added value at project level

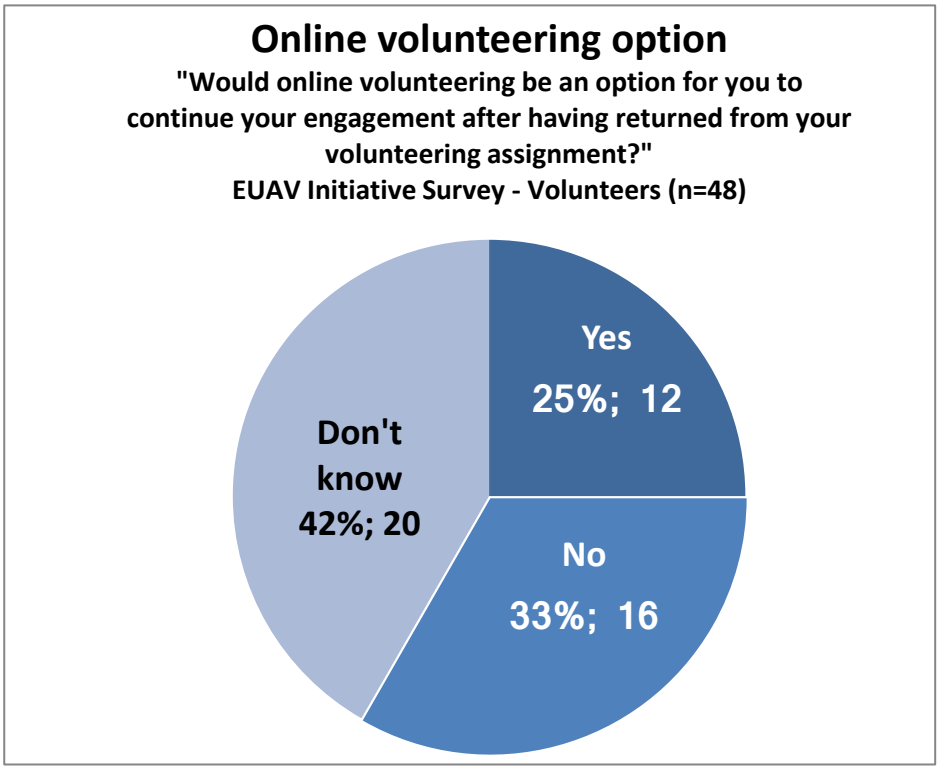
Please rate the following statements about impact and added value with respect to the project objective:

	Fully agree	Agree	Fully agree & Agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Fully disagree	Slightly disagree & Fully disagree	Responses
My presence and work is contributing to the capacity development of the hosting organisation in a tangible way	5	20		10	6	2		43
	11,63%	46,51%	***58,14%***	23,26%	13,95%	4,65%	***18,60%***	
The knowledge transferred during the volunteering assignment will actively be used and will be multiplied by the hosting organisation	4	14		15	4	3		40
	10,00%	35,00%	***45,00%***	37,50%	10,00%	7,50%	***17,50%***	
My work is contributing significantly to the resilience and preparedness of the communities with which my hosting organisation works	5	13		13	7	0		38
	13,16%	34,21%	***47,37%***	34,21%	18,42%	0,00%	***18,42%***	
There is a positive perception in the host country about European volunteering because of the work I am doing there	5	12		15	4	2		38
	13,16%	31,58%	***44,74%***	39,47%	10,53%	5,26%	***15,79%***	
The positive perception of my work will lead to further opportunities for European volunteers	6	18		12	4	1		41
	14,63%	43,90%	***58,54%***	29,27%	9,76%	2,44%	***12,20%***	
My work is helping to foster local volunteering in my host country	4	9		19	5	2		39
	10,26%	23,08%	***33,33%***	48,72%	12,82%	5,13%	***17,95%***	

Intention to continue engagement



Online volunteering option



11.2 Survey for EUAV European Actors (Sending organisations / others)

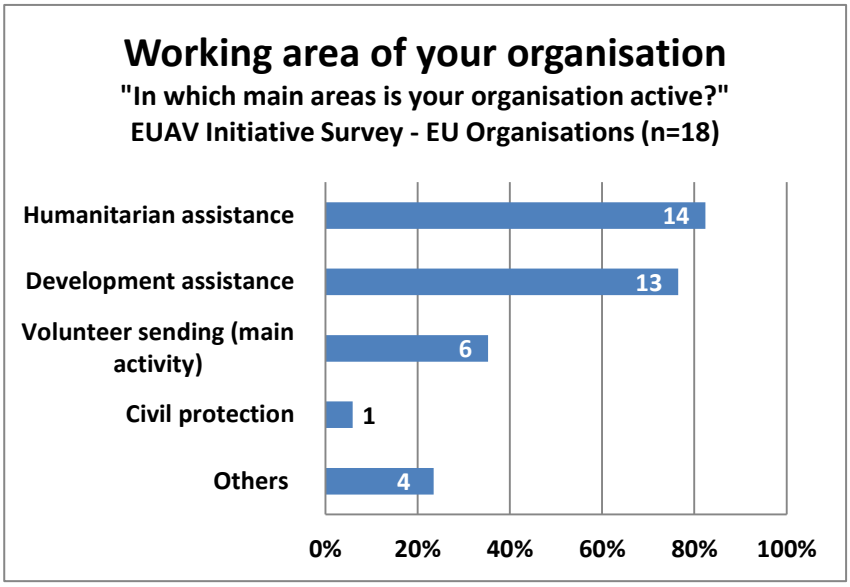
Response statistics

Out of 33 invited EU actors (i.e. sending organisations, recipients of technical assistance, EU partners in EUAV funded projects) altogether 18 organisations responded to the survey which resulted in a response rate of about 55%. With more than half of the population responding, the results are valuable and represent a solid base of information.

Important remark: The number of respondents (n) varies as sometimes no answer was provided by a respondent in relation to a specific item. Discrepancies between the result figures and the number of respondents occur because there were items for which multiple responses were possible.

Population Variables

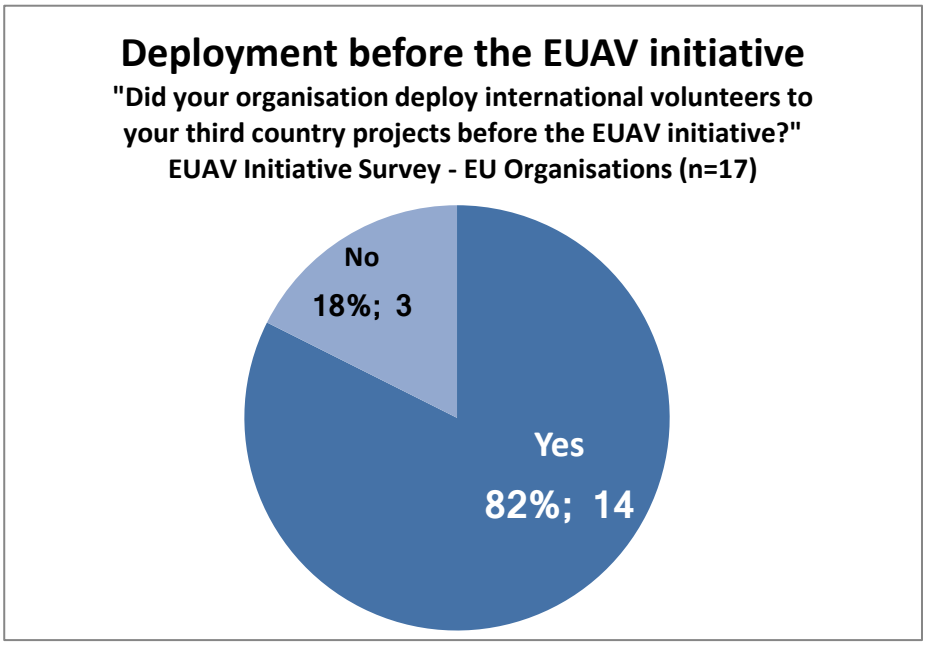
Working area



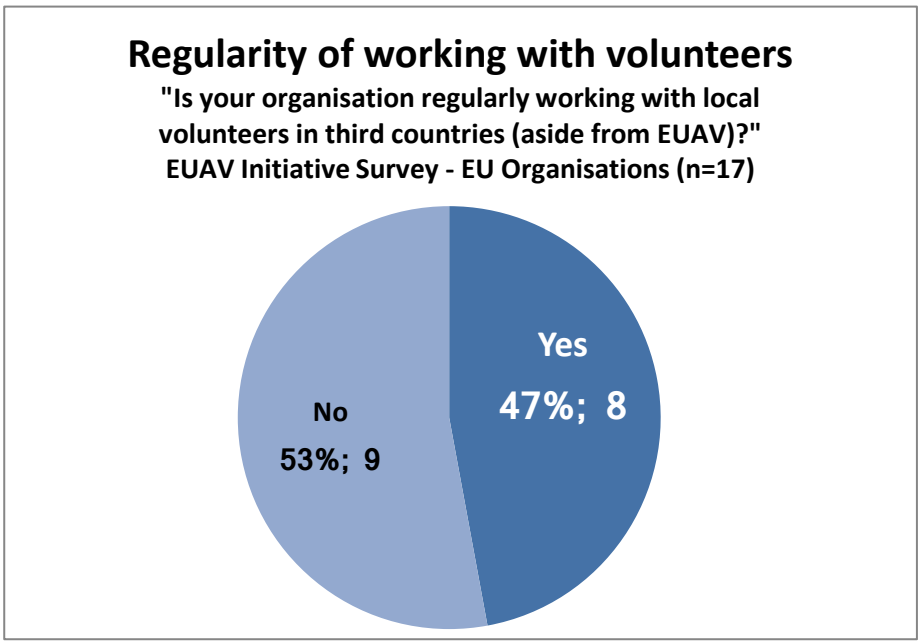
Remark: multiple answers possible

➔ As can be seen, the majority of the organisations are active in both, **humanitarian assistance and development assistance**. Only one responding organisation indicated it was active in Civil Protection.

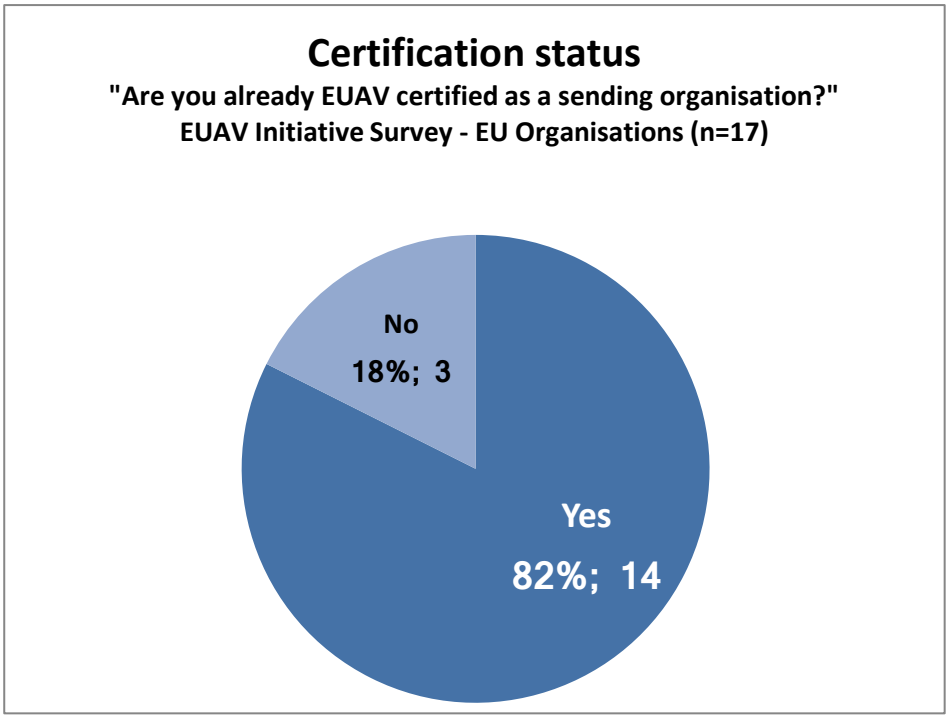
Development of volunteers before the EUAV Initiative



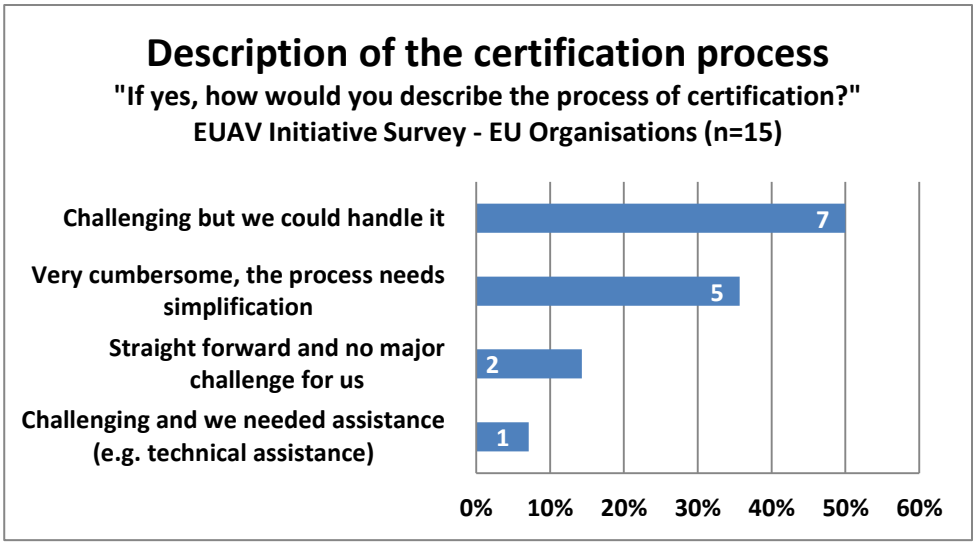
Regularity of working with volunteers



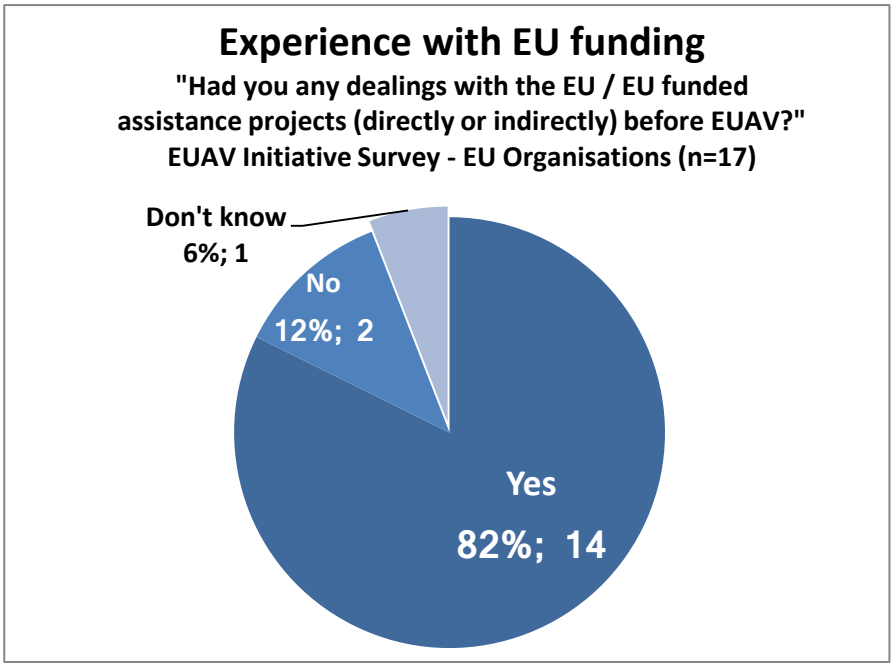
Status regarding certification



Description of the certification process



Experience with working for the EU / EU funded assistance projects



RELEVANCE OF EUAV

To what degree do you agree with the following statements related to the relevance of EUAV?

	Fully agree	Agree	Fully agree & Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Fully disagree	Disagree & Fully disagree	Responses
The EUAV Initiative addresses a clear gap in the humanitarian aid provision by the EU that no other initiative covers.	2	11		2	0	0		15
	13,33%	73,33%	***86,67%***	13,33%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
The initiative is relevant to us as an EU organisation and its eligible activities reflect the needs of third country communities and volunteers at the same time.	3	12		1	1	0		17
	17,65%	70,59%	***88,24%***	5,88%	5,88%	0,00%	***5,88%***	
The EUAV Initiative's activities respond to the needs of third country communities.	2	9		4	1	0		16
	12,50%	56,25%	***68,75%***	25,00%	6,25%	0,00%	***6,25%***	
The initiative is relevant for EU citizens looking to engage in humanitarian work.	5	11		0	1	0		17
	29,41%	64,71%	***94,12%***	0,00%	5,88%	0,00%	***5,88%***	
The initiative helps to improve the capacity and resilience of vulnerable or disaster affected communities in third countries.	2	8		6	0	0		16
	12,50%	50,00%	***62,50%***	37,50%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
EUAV is an effective vehicle to create awareness of EU values, the EU humanitarian system in the EU and in third countries.	2	10		5	0	0		17
	11,76%	58,82%	***70,59%***	29,41%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	

COHERENCE OF EUAV

To what degree do you agree with the following statements related to the coherence of EUAV?

	Fully agree	Agree	Fully agree & Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Fully disagree	Disagree & Fully disagree	Responses
The activities eligible under EUAV are coherent with related EU activities and activities of other international actors.	2	9		4	1	0		16
	12,50%	56,25%	***68,75%***	25,00%	6,25%	0,00%	***6,25%***	
Our organisation experiences EUAV as a well-coordinated initiative which is needs-based and is aligned with other actors and approaches in its specific fields of coverage.	1	12		1	1	1		16
	6,25%	75,00%	***81,25%***	6,25%	6,25%	6,25%	***12,50%***	

EU ADDED VALUE OF EUAV

To what degree do you agree with the following statements related to the EU Added Value of EUAV?

	Fully agree	Agree	Fully agree & Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Fully disagree	Disagree & Fully disagree	Responses
The EUAV Initiative addresses gaps in the humanitarian sector.	0	10		3	3	0		16
	0,00%	62,50%	***62,50%***	18,75%	18,75%	0,00%	***18,75%***	
National initiatives of the EU member states could not have addressed these needs / gaps effectively.	2	4		5	3	0		14
	14,29%	28,57%	***42,86%***	35,71%	21,43%	0,00%	***21,43%***	
Particularly though its European dimension (transnational partnerships, technical assistance for EU actors, etc.) EUAV helps to create visibility for EU humanitarian actions and EU values inside and outside the EU.	3	13		0	0	0		16
	18,75%	81,25%	***100,00%***	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	

EFFECTIVENESS OF EUAV

To what degree do you agree with the following statements related to the effectiveness of EUAV?

	Fully agree	Agree	Fully agree & Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Fully disagree	Disagree & Fully disagree	Responses
The EUAV Initiative strengthens the EU capacity to deliver humanitarian aid.	1	12		2	2	0		17
	5,88%	70,59%	***76,47%***	11,76%	11,76%	0,00%	***11,76%***	
As an organisation we observe strong skill development and improvement of our apprentices and volunteers during their deployment.	3	4		3	0	0		10
	30,00%	40,00%	***70,00%***	30,00%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
We can observe that the deployments and capacity building efforts at host organisation level leads to improved response capacities.	2	8		4	0	0		14
	14,29%	57,14%	***71,43%***	28,57%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
EUAV helps to strengthen coherence in the humanitarian sector and in particular helps to reduce inconsistencies related to international volunteering in the Member States of the EU.	0	6		4	4	0		14
	0,00%	42,86%	***42,86%***	28,57%	28,57%	0,00%	***28,57%***	
The tools put in place by the Commission to manage the volunteer cycle (e.g. Internet platform) are useful for us, particularly in support of the recruitment of volunteers.	1	7		2	1	1		12
	8,33%	58,33%	***66,67%***	16,67%	8,33%	8,33%	***16,67%***	
Our participation in the initiative has provided us with new contacts, partners, operational insights and enhanced knowledge exchange (due to the consortium / transnational partner requirement).	8	6		3	0	0		17
	47,06%	35,29%	***82,35%***	17,65%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Overall, we can confirm that participation in EUAV actions stimulates a joint identity amongst all stakeholders (i.e. int. and local volunteers, hosting organisations, communities, sending organisations) and we expect that this will create long-lasting relationships.	5	8		2	0	0		15
	33,33%	53,33%	***86,67%***	13,33%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	

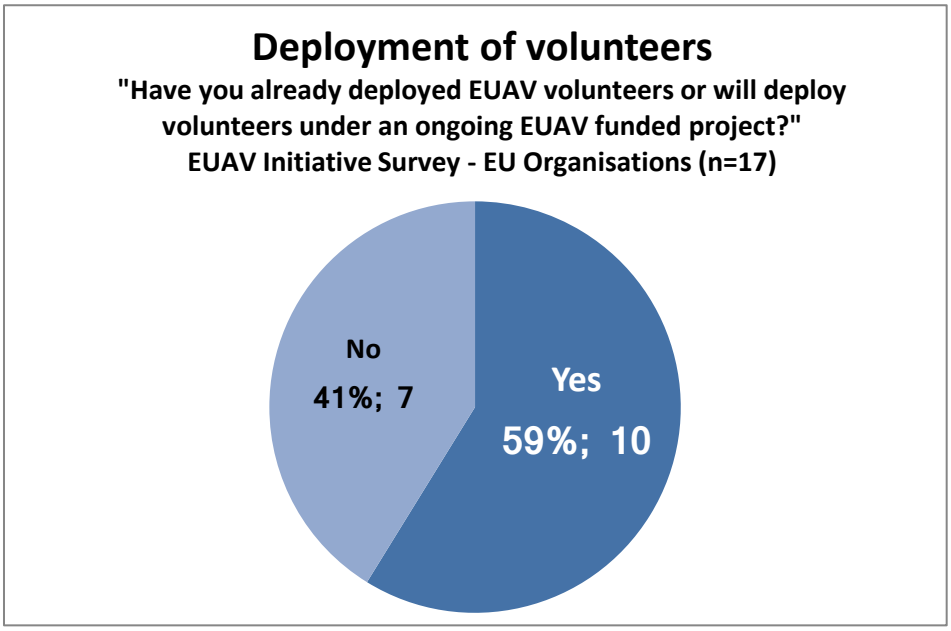
EFFICIENCY OF EUAV

To what degree do you agree with the following statements related to the efficiency of EUAV?

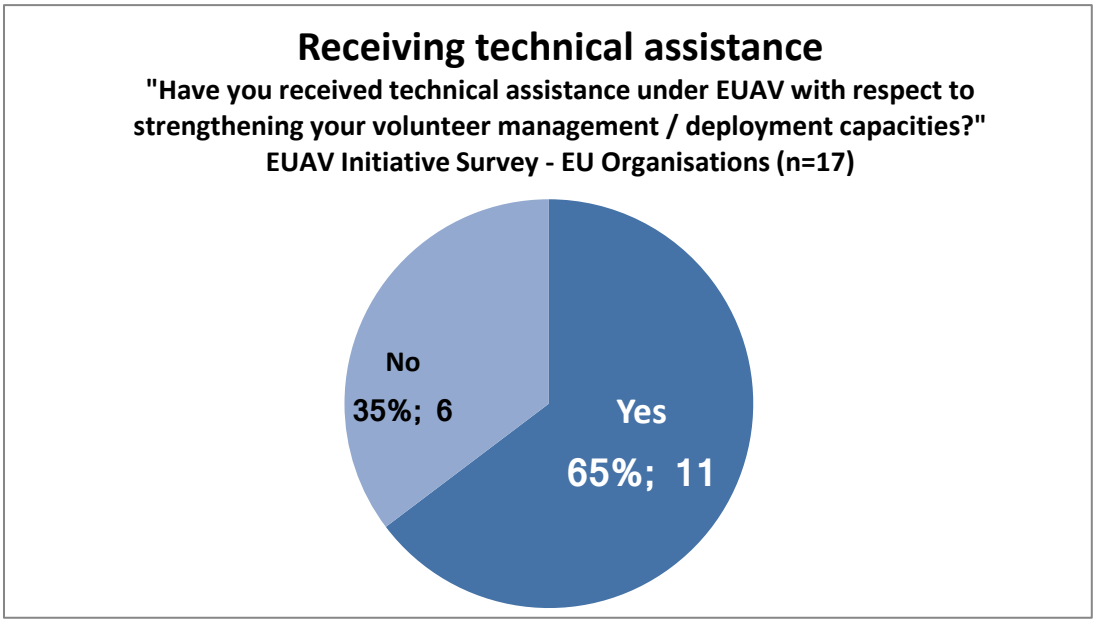
	Fully agree	Agree	Fully agree & Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Fully disagree	Disagree & Fully disagree	Responses
The EUAV certification and standards for volunteer management have been beneficial for us as an organisation.	2	11		1	1	0		15
	13,33%	73,33%	***86,67%***	6,67%	6,67%	0,00%	***6,67%***	
The requirements resulting from the standards and requirements provide an essential basis for the responsible involvement / deployment of volunteers in humanitarian actions abroad.	0	13		2	0	0		15
	0,00%	86,67%	***86,67%***	13,33%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
The requirements resulting from the standards are too complex and have a negative effect on the effectiveness and efficiency of our operations under EUAV.	3	3		1	8	0		15
	20,00%	20,00%	***40,00%***	6,67%	53,33%	0,00%	***53,33%***	
There is a clear need for simplification of processes and procedures to make EUAV more efficient.	7	4		4	1	0		16
	43,75%	25,00%	***68,75%***	25,00%	6,25%	0,00%	***6,25%***	

Respondents by type of engagement / involvement in the intitiative

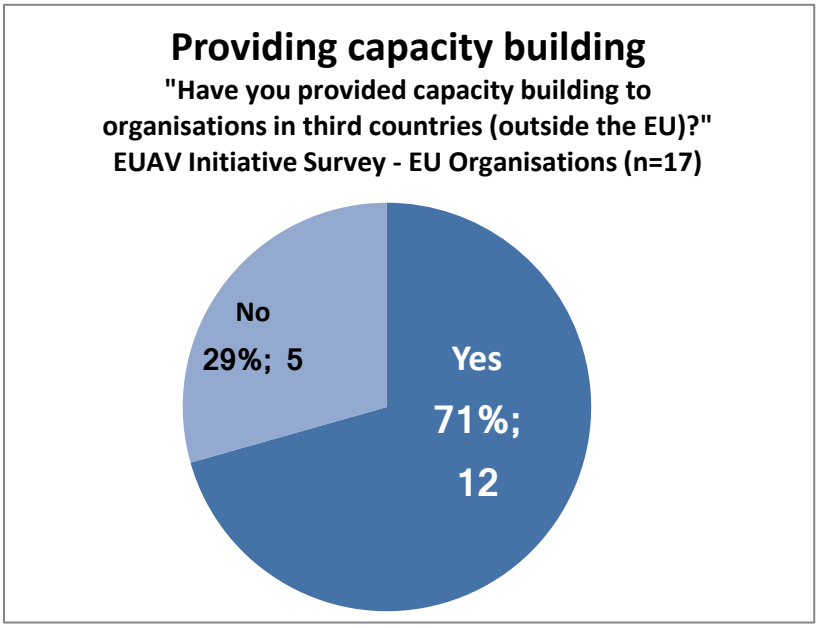
Deployment of volunteers



Receiving technical assistance



Providing capacity building



II - Satisfaction with the Implementation Framework for deployment (SO perspective)

Q25 Overall satisfaction with the implementation framework for the deployment of volunteers under EUAV, please rate the statement below:

	Fully satisfied	Satisfied	Fully satisfied & satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied & Very dissatisfied	Responses
Overall, how satisfied are you with the deployment element of EUAV?	3	4		0	0	1		8
	37,50%	50,00%	***87,50%***	0,00%	0,00%	12,50%	***12,50%***	

Satisfaction with deploying EUAV volunteers

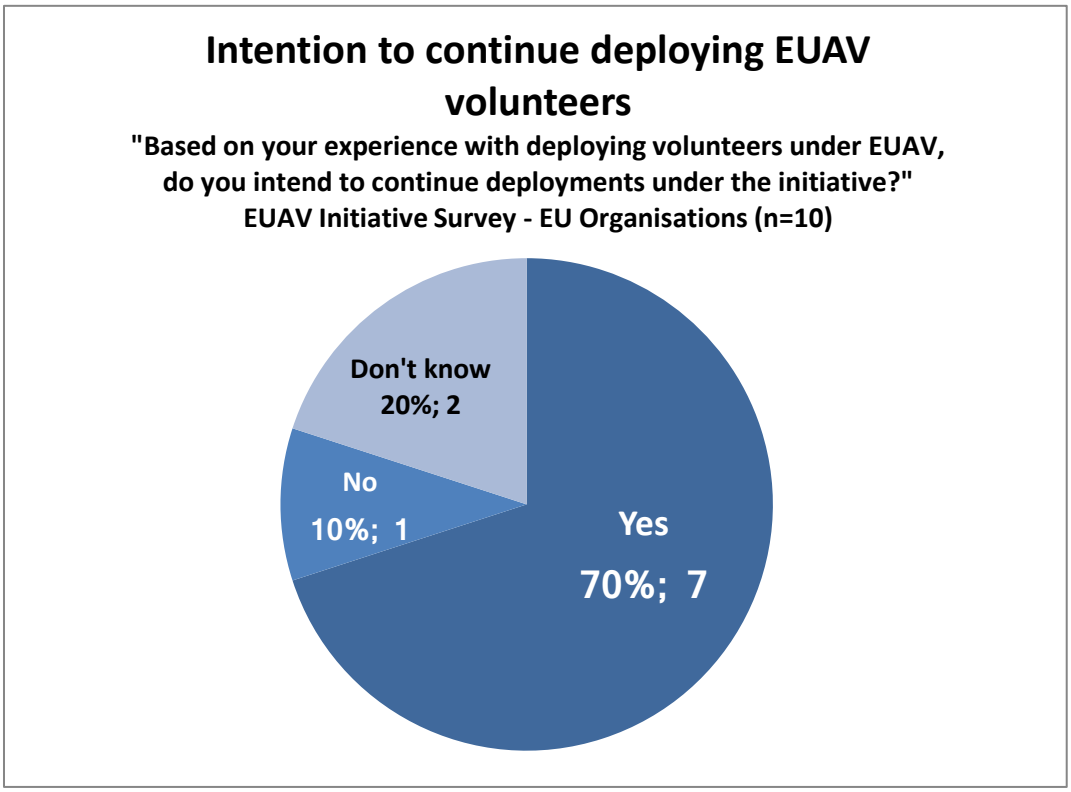
How satisfied are you with the following aspects of deploying EUAV volunteers?

	Fully satisfied	Satisfied	Fully satisfied & satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied & Very dissatisfied	Responses
Overall clarity of information available about EUAV (objectives, requirements, standards, rules, regulations and processes).	1	7		0	1	0		9
	11,11%	77,78%	***88,89%***	0,00%	11,11%	0,00%	***11,11%***	
Certification mechanism and related requirements, rules and processes.	0	6		1	1	1		9
	0,00%	66,67%	***66,67%***	11,11%	11,11%	11,11%	***22,22%***	
Organisation, content and structure of the calls for proposal (overall).	1	7		1	1	0		10
	10,00%	70,00%	***80,00%***	10,00%	10,00%	0,00%	***10,00%***	
Trans-national partnership requirement of the EUAV Initiative.	1	7		1	1	0		10
	10,00%	70,00%	***80,00%***	10,00%	10,00%	0,00%	***10,00%***	
Eligible activities under the calls and the flexibility provided to adapt to different operational (humanitarian) contexts.	0	6		0	4	0		10
	0,00%	60,00%	***60,00%***	0,00%	40,00%	0,00%	***40,00%***	
Standards and requirements put in place related to the deployment (entire volunteer management cycle).	0	5		0	4	0		9
	0,00%	55,56%	***55,56%***	0,00%	44,44%	0,00%	***44,44%***	
Type of training provided to the volunteers by the EUAV training scheme put in place.	1	4		2	2	0		9
	11,11%	44,44%	***55,56%***	22,22%	22,22%	0,00%	***22,22%***	
IT tools / Web tools put in place to facilitate recruitment, exchange and networking ("The Platform").	0	1		3	4	1		9
	0,00%	11,11%	***11,11%***	33,33%	44,44%	11,11%	***55,56%***	
Communication measures planned and organised by DG ECHO in order to create awareness about EU values, EU humanitarian aid and volunteering.	0	7		1	1	0		9
	0,00%	77,78%	***77,78%***	11,11%	11,11%	0,00%	***11,11%***	
Budget to manage the volunteer deployments (proportion of the total contract value permitted for internal staff costs to manage volunteers).	0	3		2	1	3		9
	0,00%	33,33%	***33,33%***	22,22%	11,11%	33,33%	***44,44%***	
Administration and management performance of the Executive Agency EACEA in managing the grants (your overall perception).	2	7		0	0	0		9
	22,22%	77,78%	***100,00%***	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of deploying EUAV volunteers?

	Fully satisfied	Satisfied	Fully satisfied & satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied & Very dissatisfied	Responses
Matching of volunteers profiles with project / host organisation needs (in retrospect).	3	3		0	1	0		7
	42,86%	42,86%	***85,71%***	0,00%	14,29%	0,00%	***14,29%***	
Ease of aligning EUAV needs assessments and task assignments with the DG ECHO HIPs.	0	3		2	1	0		6
	0,00%	50,00%	***50,00%***	33,33%	16,67%	0,00%	***16,67%***	
Level of skill improvement of the deployed volunteers during deployment.	1	3		2	0	0		6
	16,67%	50,00%	***66,67%***	33,33%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Establishment of new partnerships in the EU and third countries.	3	4		1	0	0		8
	37,50%	50,00%	***87,50%***	12,50%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Chances to gain new staff members as result of the deployment projects / volunteers managed.	2	4		1	0	0		7
	28,57%	57,14%	***85,71%***	14,29%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Enhanced relationship with host organisations through the deployment of EUAV volunteers.	1	4		2	0	0		7
	14,29%	57,14%	***71,43%***	28,57%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Actual impact of the EUAV volunteer deployments on the capacity of the host organisations.	1	4		2	0	0		7
	14,29%	57,14%	***71,43%***	28,57%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Actual impact of the volunteer deployments on community resilience.	0	2		4	0	0		6
	0,00%	33,33%	***33,33%***	66,67%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Sustainability of the volunteers' contributions during their deployment.	0	4		2	0	0		6
	0,00%	66,67%	***66,67%***	33,33%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Degree to which the deployments addressed a real institutional need of the hosting organisation / community (in retrospect).	0	5		2	0	0		7
	0,00%	71,43%	***71,43%***	28,57%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	

Intention to continue deployments



II - Satisfaction with the Technical Assistance component (Beneficiary perspective)

Overall satisfaction with the technical assistance received through EUAV funding, please rate the statement below:

	Fully satisfied	Satisfied	Fully satisfied & satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied & Very dissatisfied	Responses
Overall, how satisfied were your / are you with the technical assistance funded by EUAV and provided to your organisation?	4	7		0	0	0		11
	36,36%	63,64%	***100,00%***	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	

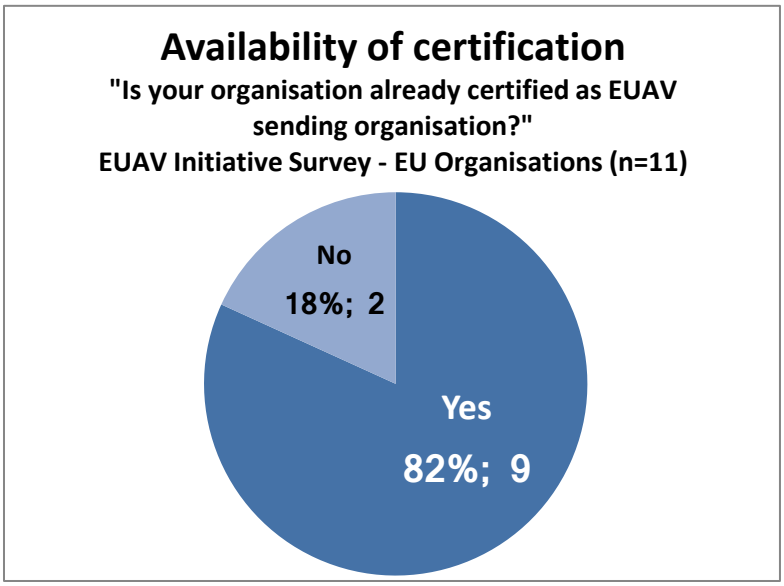
How satisfied are you with the following aspects of receiving technical assistance under the EUAV Initiative?

	Fully satisfied	Satisfied	Fully satisfied & satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied & Very dissatisfied	Responses
Quality of the communication and information from your EU partner organisation(s).	2	9		0	0	0		11
	18,18%	81,82%	***100,00%***	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Your involvement in the needs assessment, planning and conception of the project activities.	3	7		0	1	0		11
	27,27%	63,64%	***90,91%***	0,00%	9,09%	0,00%	***9,09%***	
Degree to which your particular technical assistance needs have been addressed by the project.	3	6		0	1	0		10
	30,00%	60,00%	***90,00%***	0,00%	10,00%	0,00%	***10,00%***	
Level of financial support received to implement the technical assistance project (was the budget sufficient to achieve what was planned?).	3	7		0	0	1		11
	27,27%	63,64%	***90,91%***	0,00%	0,00%	9,09%	***9,09%***	

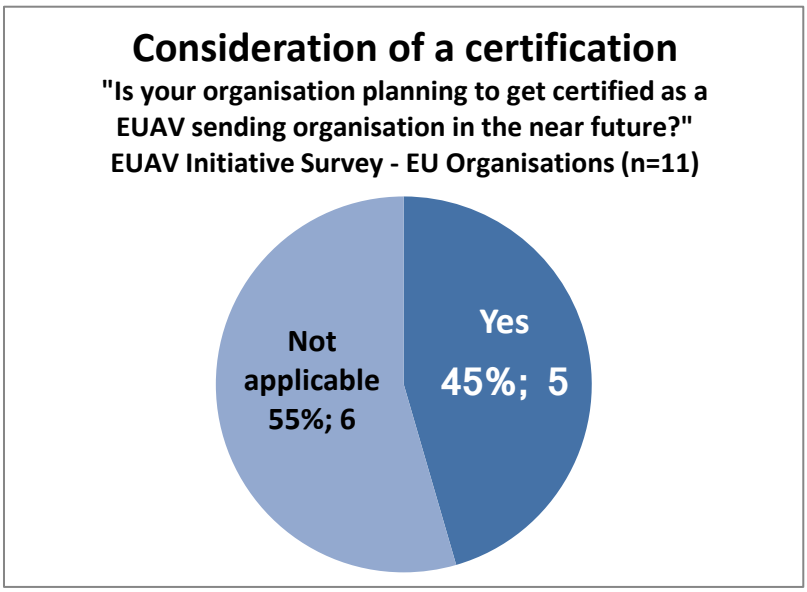
To what degree were you satisfied with:

	Fully satisfied	Satisfied	Fully satisfied & satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied & Very dissatisfied	Responses
Quality of the support received by the EU partners.	4	6		0	1	0		11
	36,36%	54,55%	***90,91%***	0,00%	9,09%	0,00%	***9,09%***	
Adequacy and quality of the staff provided by the EU partners.	4	4		2	0	0		10
	40,00%	40,00%	***80,00%***	20,00%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Level of improvement of capacity to manage international volunteers.	4	5		1	0	0		10
	40,00%	50,00%	***90,00%***	10,00%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Level of improvement of other specific capacities which were targeted within the TA project (name them and score them).	4	5		1	0	0		10
	40,00%	50,00%	***90,00%***	10,00%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Usefulness of the technical assistance for achieving certification (if you are already certified).	0	3		4	0	0		7
	0,00%	42,86%	***42,86%***	57,14%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Expansion of our network of potential partners in the EU.	4	2		5	0	0		11
	36,36%	18,18%	***54,55%***	45,45%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	

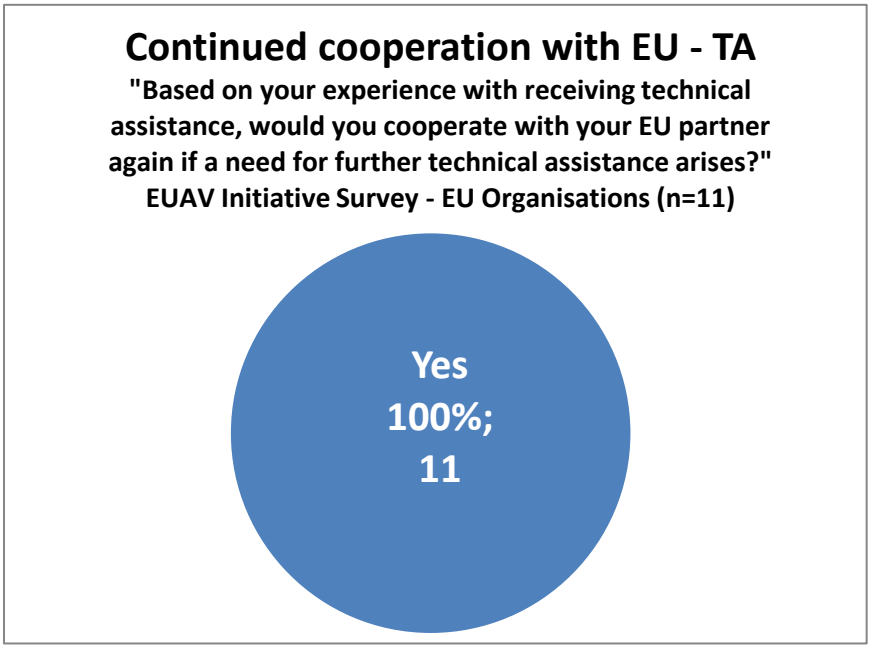
Status of certification



Consideration of certification



Continued cooperation with your partner



III - Satisfaction with the Capacity Building Component (SO perspective)

Overall satisfaction with the capacity building component of EUAV, please rate the statement below:

	Fully satisfied	Satisfied	Fully satisfied & satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied & Very dissatisfied	Responses
Overall, how satisfied were you / are you with the capacity building provided by your organisation through an EUAV project?	3	8		0	0	0		11
	27,27%	72,73%	***100,00%***	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	

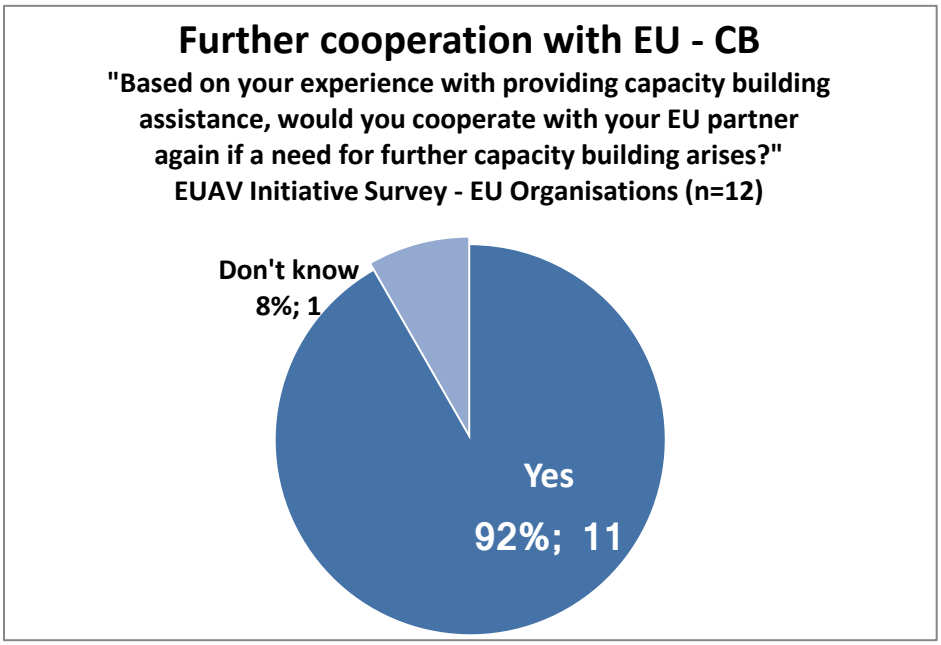
How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your capacity building under the EUAV Initiative?

	Fully satisfied	Satisfied	Fully satisfied & satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied & Very dissatisfied	Responses
Overall degree to which the EUAV Initiative (capacity building component) is relevant to the needs in the recipient organisations.	1	10		0	0	0		11
	9,09%	90,91%	***100,00%***	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Overall degree to which the EUAV Initiative is relevant to the needs in the recipients community.	0	8		3	0	0		11
	0,00%	72,73%	***72,73%***	27,27%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Degree to which the capacity building project addressed an actual need / gap.	0	9		2	0	0		11
	0,00%	81,82%	***81,82%***	18,18%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Quality of the communication and information between the organisations within the capacity building project.	1	9		1	0	0		11
	9,09%	81,82%	***90,91%***	9,09%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Your involvement in the needs assessment, planning and conception of the project activities .	4	7		0	0	0		11
	36,36%	63,64%	***100,00%***	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Level of financial support received to organise the capacity building project (was the budget sufficient to achieve what was planned?).	1	7		3	0	0		11
	9,09%	63,64%	***72,73%***	27,27%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	

To what degree were you satisfied with:

	Fully satisfied	Satisfied	Fully satisfied & satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied & Very dissatisfied	Responses
Overall quality of capacity building by your organisation (self-evaluation).	0	9		0	0	0		9
	0,00%	100,00%	***100,00%***	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Adequacy and quality of the staff provided by your EU partners.	3	5		2	0	0		10
	30,00%	50,00%	***80,00%***	20,00%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Level of improvement of the hosting organisations capacity to prepare for disasters.	1	5		3	0	0		9
	11,11%	55,56%	***66,67%***	33,33%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Level of improvement of the hosting organisations capacity to respond to disasters.	0	6		3	0	0		9
	0,00%	66,67%	***66,67%***	33,33%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Contribution of the project to improving local volunteering.	1	4		2	1	0		8
	12,50%	50,00%	***62,50%***	25,00%	12,50%	0,00%	***12,50%***	
Level of improvement of the provision of early warning to the local communities.	0	3		3	1	0		7
	0,00%	42,86%	***42,86%***	42,86%	14,29%	0,00%	***14,29%***	
Initial expectations have been met by the actual implementation of the capacity building.	1	7		1	0	0		9
	11,11%	77,78%	***88,89%***	11,11%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Level of skill development of the local volunteers and staff through the capacity building exercise.	3	4		2	0	0		9
	33,33%	44,44%	***77,78%***	22,22%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Improvement of your own visibility and reputation through giving EUAV capacity building support.	2	8		0	0	0		10
	20,00%	80,00%	***100,00%***	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Improvement of the knowledge of EU values and EU humanitarian aid delivery principles amongst the project partners.	0	8		3	0	0		11
	0,00%	72,73%	***72,73%***	27,27%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	

Further cooperation with EU - CB



11.3 Survey for Hosting Organisations

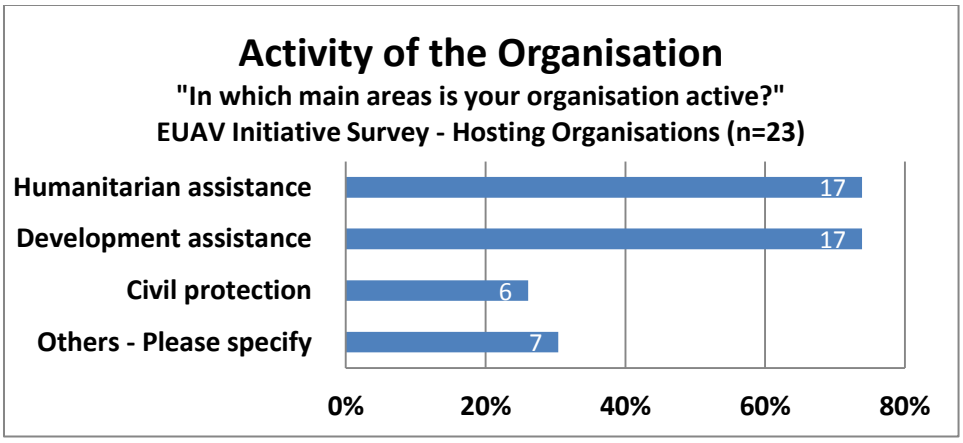
Response statistics

From 74 invited hosting organisations, 23 responded to the survey for hosting organisations, representing a response rate of about 31%.

Important remark: The number of respondents (n) varies as sometimes no answer was provided by a respondent in relation to a specific item. Discrepancies between the result figures and the number of respondents occur because there were items for which multiple responses were possible.

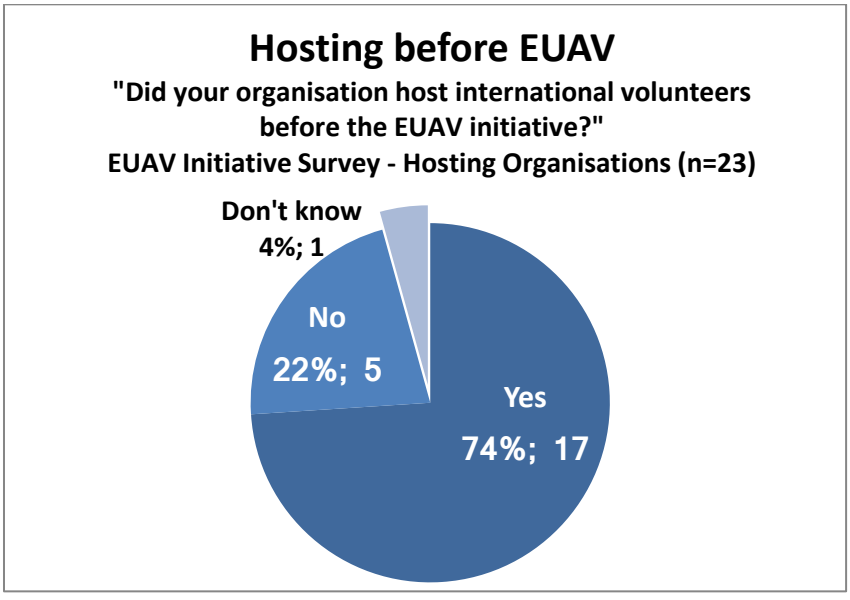
Population variables

Activity of the hosting organization

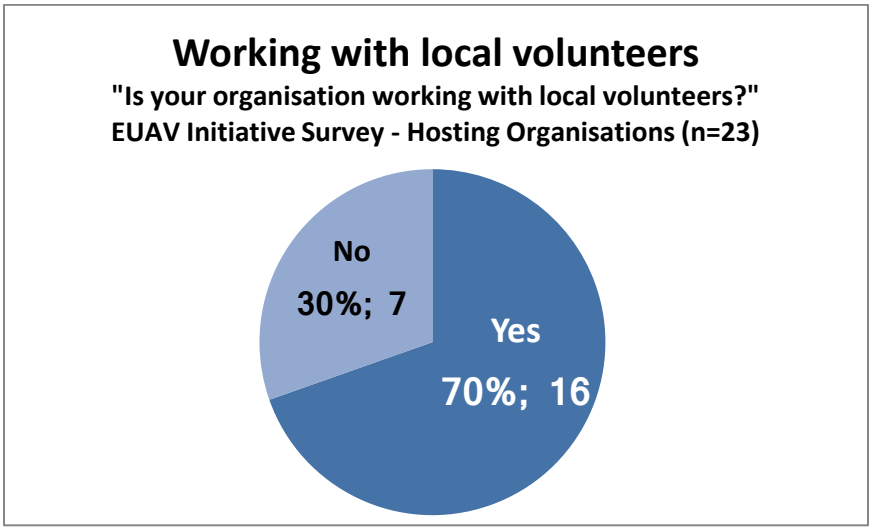


➔ The survey revealed that the majority of hosting organisations are active in both, humanitarian assistance and development assistance.

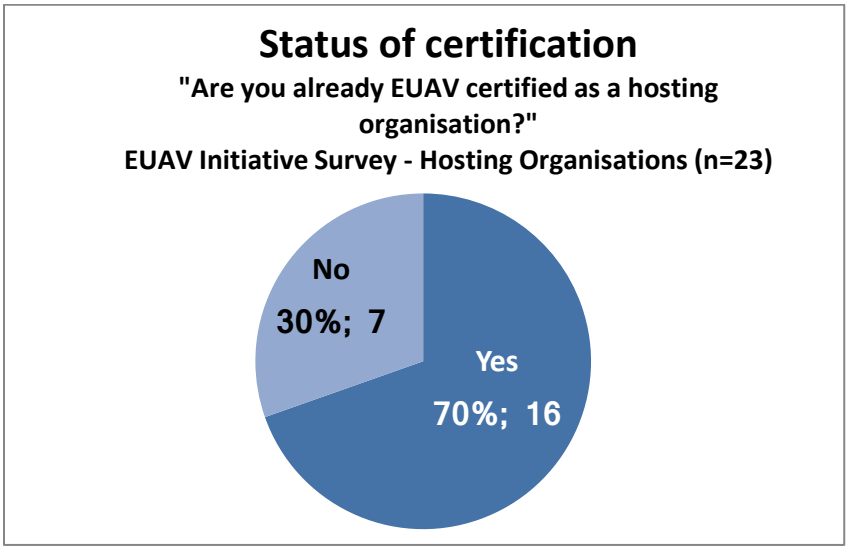
Experience with hosting volunteers before EUAV project



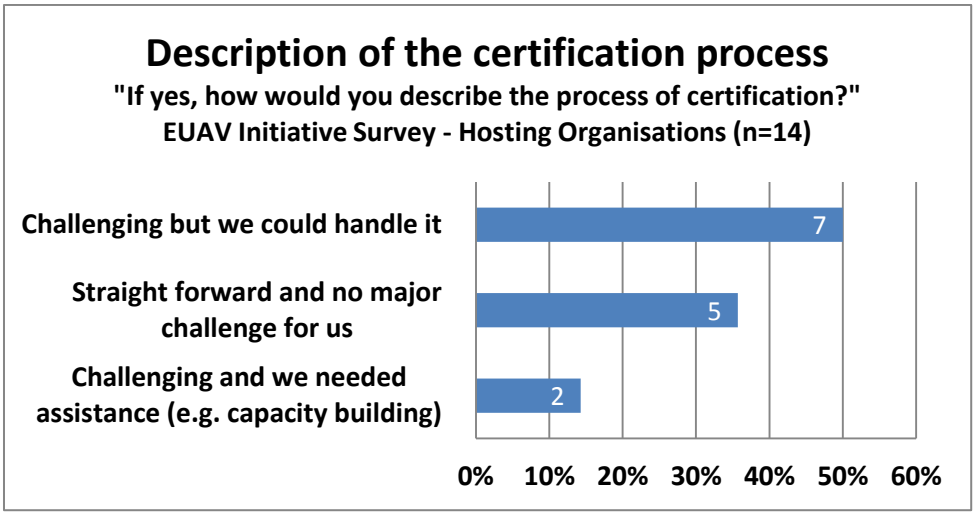
Working experience with local volunteers



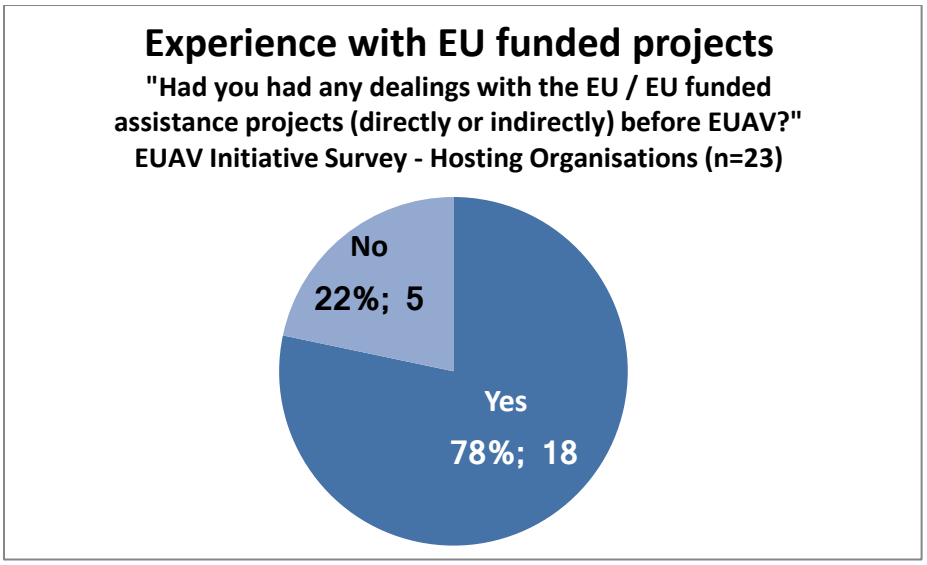
Status of EUAV certification



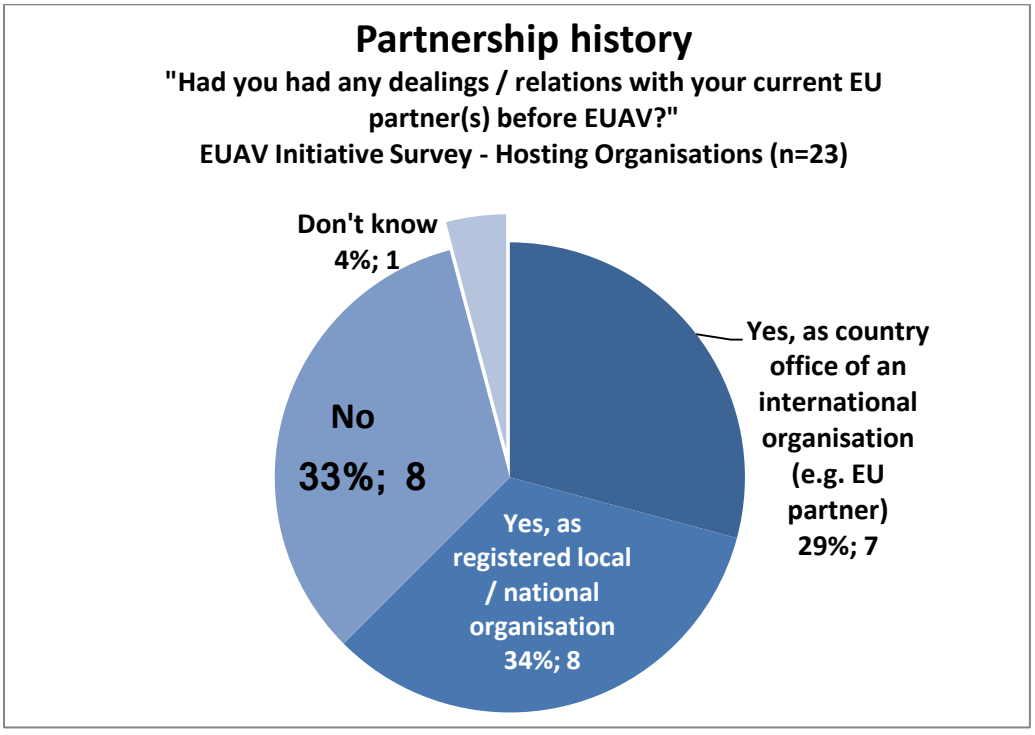
Description of the certification process



Experience with EU funded projects prior to EUAV

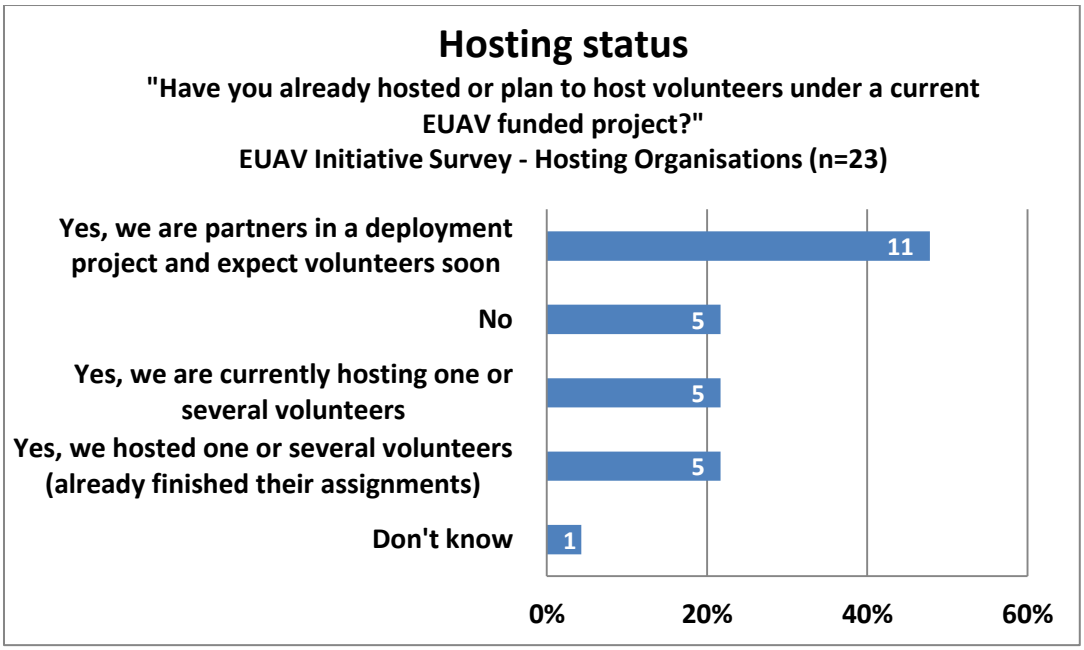


Earlier cooperation with EU partners before EUAV



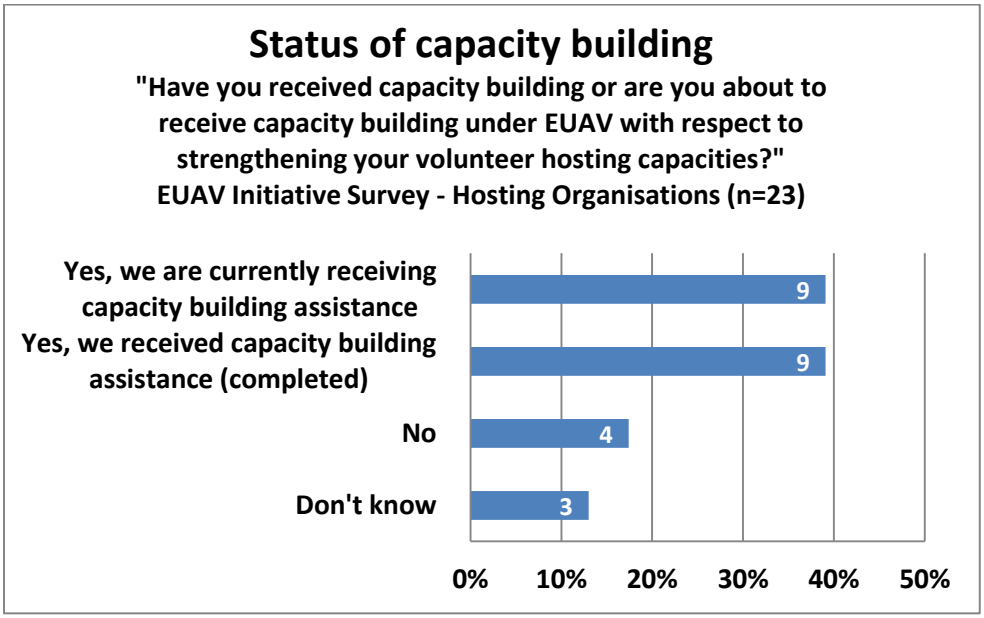
Remark: multiple answers possible

Hosting status of the organisation



Remark: multiple answers possible

Status of receiving capacity building



Remark: multiple answers possible

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE CAPACITY BUILDING COMPONENT

Overall satisfaction with the capacity building component of EUAV, please rate the statement below:

	Fully satisfied	Satisfied	Fully satisfied & Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied & Very dissatisfied	Responses
Overall, how satisfied were you / are you with the capacity building provided to your organisation through an EUAV funded project?	6	9		0	0	1		16
	37,50%	56,30%	***93,80%***	0,00%	0,00%	6,30%	***6,30%***	

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of receiving capacity building under the EUAV Initiative?

	Fully satisfied	Satisfied	Fully satisfied & Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied & Very dissatisfied	Responses
Degree to which the capacity building project addressed an actual need / gap.	4	10		0	0	0		14
	28,60%	71,40%	***100,00%***	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Quality of the communication and information provided by your EU partner organisation.	8	7		0	0	0		15
	53,30%	46,70%	***100,00%***	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Your involvement in the needs assessment, planning and conception of the project activities .	4	10		1	0	0		15
	26,70%	66,70%	***93,40%***	6,70%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Degree to which your particular capacity building needs have been successfully addressed through the project.	3	11		0	1	0		15
	20,00%	73,30%	***93,30%***	0,00%	6,70%	0,00%	***6,70%***	
Level of financial support received to implement the capacity building project (was the budget sufficient to achieve what was planned?).	1	6		5	2	0		14
	7,14%	42,86%	***50,00%***	35,71%	14,29%	0,00%	***14,29%***	

To what degree were you satisfied with:

	Fully satisfied	Satisfied	Fully satisfied & Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied & Very dissatisfied	Responses
Overall quality of capacity building support received by the EU partner(s).	3	9		1	0	0		13
	23,10%	69,20%	***92,30%***	7,70%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Adequacy and quality of the staff provided by the EU partners.	5	6		1	1	0		13
	38,50%	46,20%	***84,70%***	7,70%	7,70%	0,00%	***7,70%***	
Level of improvement of your organisation's capacity to prepare for disasters.	0	10		2	0	0		12
	0,00%	83,33%	***83,33%***	16,67%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Level of improvement of your organisation's capacity to respond to disasters.	0	10		2	0	0		12
	0,00%	83,33%	***83,33%***	16,67%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Contribution of the project to improving local volunteering.	2	7		4	0	0		13
	15,40%	53,80%	***69,20%***	30,80%	0,00%	0,00%	***0,00%***	
Level of improvement of the provision of early warning to the local communities.	1	6		3	1	0		11
	9,09%	54,55%	***63,64%***	27,27%	9,09%	0,00%	***9,09%***	
Overall appreciation of the improvement of the resilience of your community / the area you cover with your organisation.	1	7		3	1	0		12
	8,30%	58,30%	***66,60%***	25,00%	8,30%	0,00%	***8,30%***	
Initial expectations have been met by the actual implementation of the capacity building.	1	10		1	1	0		13
	7,70%	76,90%	***84,60%***	7,70%	7,70%	0,00%	***7,70%***	
Level of skill development of your local volunteers and staff through the capacity building exercise.	1	8		1	2	0		12
	8,30%	66,70%	***75,00%***	8,30%	16,70%	0,00%	***16,70%***	
Improvement of your own visibility and reputation through receiving EUAV capacity building support.	3	7		1	1	0		12
	25,00%	58,30%	***83,30%***	8,30%	8,30%	0,00%	***8,30%***	
Improvement of the knowledge of EU values and EU humanitarian aid delivery principles amongst your community members.	2	7		2	1	0		12
	16,70%	58,30%	***75,00%***	16,70%	8,30%	0,00%	***8,30%***	

Further cooperation with partner

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH HOSTING VOLUNTEERS

Overall satisfaction with the hosting of EUAV volunteers, please rate the below statement:

	Fully satisfied	Satisfied	Fully satisfied & Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied & Very dissatisfied	Responses
Overall, how satisfied were you / are you with the process for deploying volunteers under EUAV?	4	6		4	1	0		15
	26,67%	40,00%	***66,67%***	26,67%	6,67%	0,00%	***6,67%***	

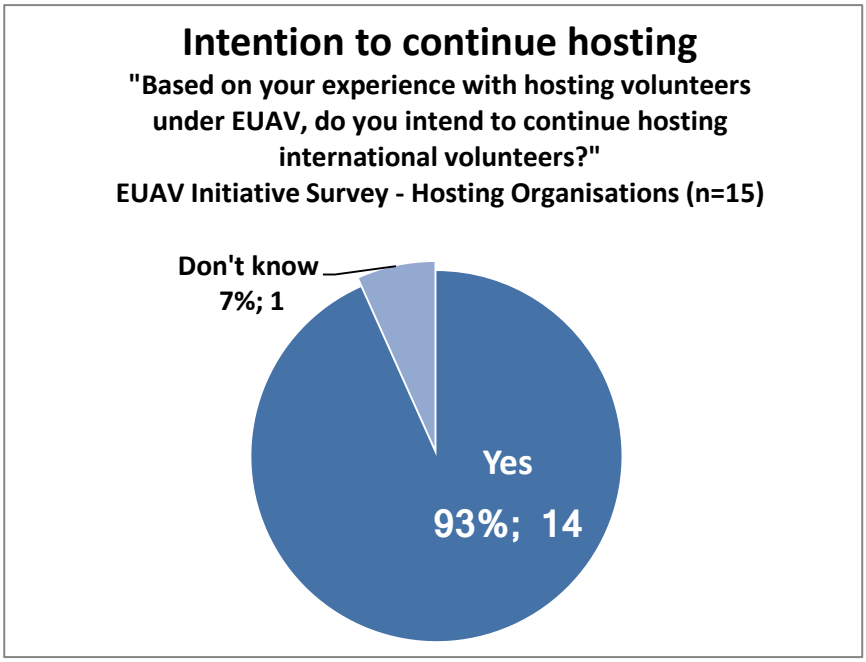
How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the hosting of EUAV volunteers?

	Fully satisfied	Satisfied	Fully satisfied & Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied & Very dissatisfied	Responses
The degree to which the EUAV Initiative (deployment) is relevant to the needs in your organisation.	8	7		0	1	0		16
	50,00%	43,75%	***93,75%***	0,00%	6,25%	0,00%	***6,25%***	
The degree to which the EUAV Initiative (deployment) is relevant to the needs in your community.	8	5		1	1	0		15
	53,33%	33,33%	***86,67%***	6,67%	6,67%	0,00%	***6,67%***	
Quality of the needs assessment in preparation of your hosting project.	2	9		2	1	0		14
	14,29%	64,29%	***78,57%***	14,29%	7,14%	0,00%	***7,14%***	
Adequacy of EUAV standards and procedures for the management of volunteers.	3	5		3	1	0		12
	25,00%	41,67%	***66,67%***	25,00%	8,33%	0,00%	***8,33%***	
Level of training and preparation of the EUAV volunteers you have received / hosted.	4	4		3	2	0		13
	30,77%	30,77%	***61,54%***	23,08%	15,38%	0,00%	***15,38%***	
Degree to which the EUAV volunteers addressed a need / gap.	4	3		3	3	0		13
	30,77%	23,08%	***53,85%***	23,08%	23,08%	0,00%	***23,08%***	
Funds and resources provided to enable you to host the EUAV volunteers (in line with the standards and requirements).	1	3		7	3	0		14
	7,14%	21,43%	***28,57%***	50,00%	21,43%	0,00%	***21,43%***	
Funds and resources provided to realise project objectives of the hosting in an effective and sustainable way (e.g. material, equipment, consumables).	1	4		5	4	0		14
	7,14%	28,57%	***35,71%***	35,71%	28,57%	0,00%	***28,57%***	

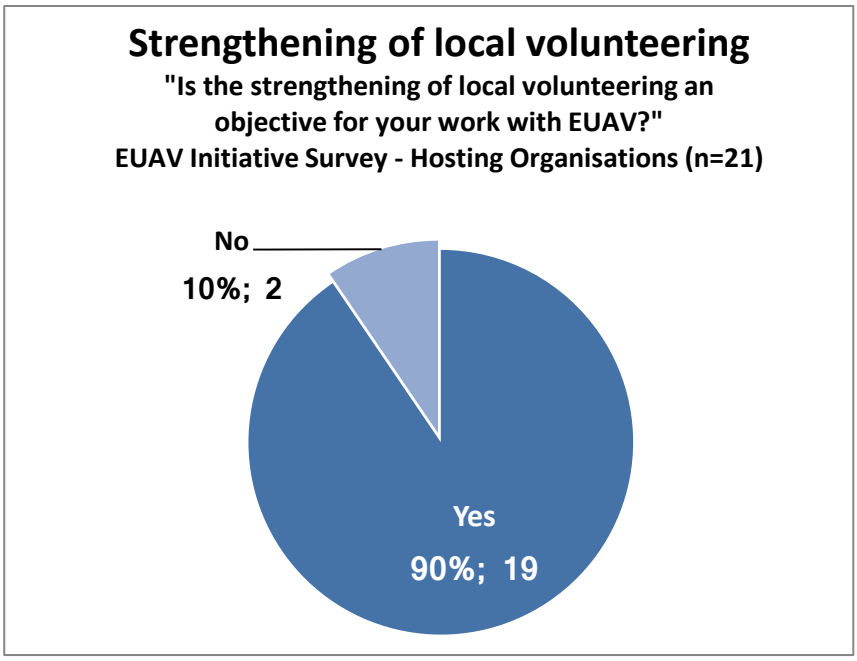
To what degree were you satisfied with:

	Fully satisfied	Satisfied	Fully satisfied & Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied & Very dissatisfied	Responses
Degree to which the expertise and skills of the international volunteers matched actual project requirements.	3	4		3	3	0		13
	23,08%	30,77%	***53,85%***	23,08%	23,08%	0,00%	***23,08%***	
Degree to which the international volunteers contributed to the development / improvement of your capacity.	5	3		4	1	0		13
	38,46%	23,08%	***61,54%***	30,77%	7,69%	0,00%	***7,69%***	
Level of skill development of the European volunteers during their presence in your organisation.	3	5		4	1	0		13
	23,08%	38,46%	***61,54%***	30,77%	7,69%	0,00%	***7,69%***	
Improvement of your own visibility and reputation through hosting of European volunteers.	2	5		4	2	0		13
	15,38%	38,46%	***53,85%***	30,77%	15,38%	0,00%	***15,38%***	
Improvement of the knowledge of EU values and EU humanitarian aid delivery principles amongst your community members.	2	6		2	3	0		13
	15,38%	46,15%	***61,54%***	15,38%	23,08%	0,00%	***23,08%***	
Improvement of your capacity to provide humanitarian assistance through hosting of EUAV volunteers.	3	5		3	2	0		13
	23,08%	38,46%	***61,54%***	23,08%	15,38%	0,00%	***15,38%***	
Contribution of the hosting exercise to the development of a shared identity (EUAV volunteers, local staff and volunteers, your organisation and the community you cover).	3	5		2	1	0		11
	27,27%	45,45%	***72,73%***	18,18%	9,09%	0,00%	***9,09%***	

Intention to continue hosting EUAV volunteers



Strengthening of local volunteering



Were there alternatives to the EUAV Initiative for both the volunteering and the capacity building which would have addressed the gaps and had similar impact?

	Yes, there was an alternative	No, there was no alternative	Don't know / Not applicable	Responses
Volunteering component alternatives	6	10	4	20
	30,00%	50,00%	20,00%	
Capacity building alternatives	5	11	3	19
	26,30%	57,90%	15,80%	

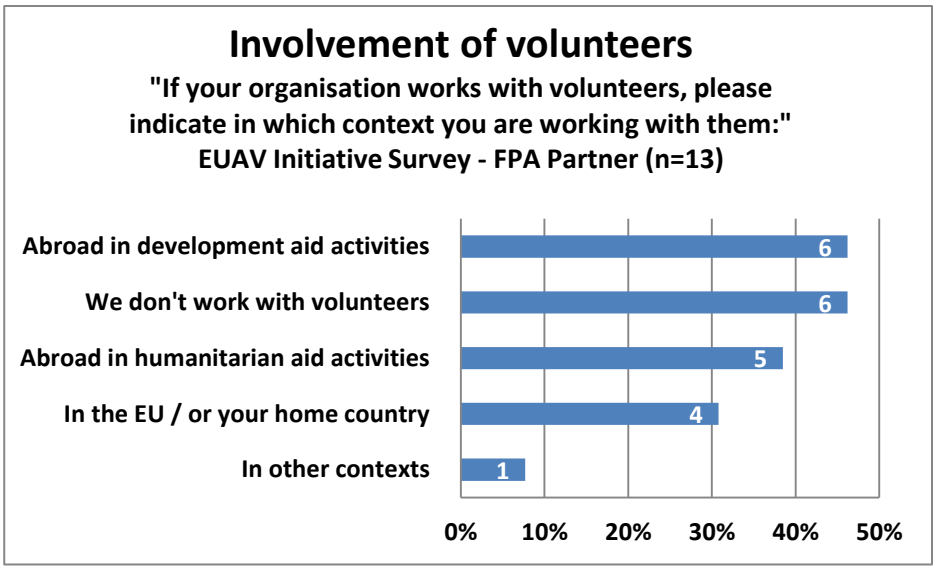
11.4 Survey for DG ECHO FPA partners

Participation

The survey for DG ECHO FPA partners was addressed to those partners not yet engaged in EUAV and not having participated in pilot projects as lead partner. The evaluation team invited around 168 FPA partners and received 13 responses, which is considered quite a limited response rate of about 8%.

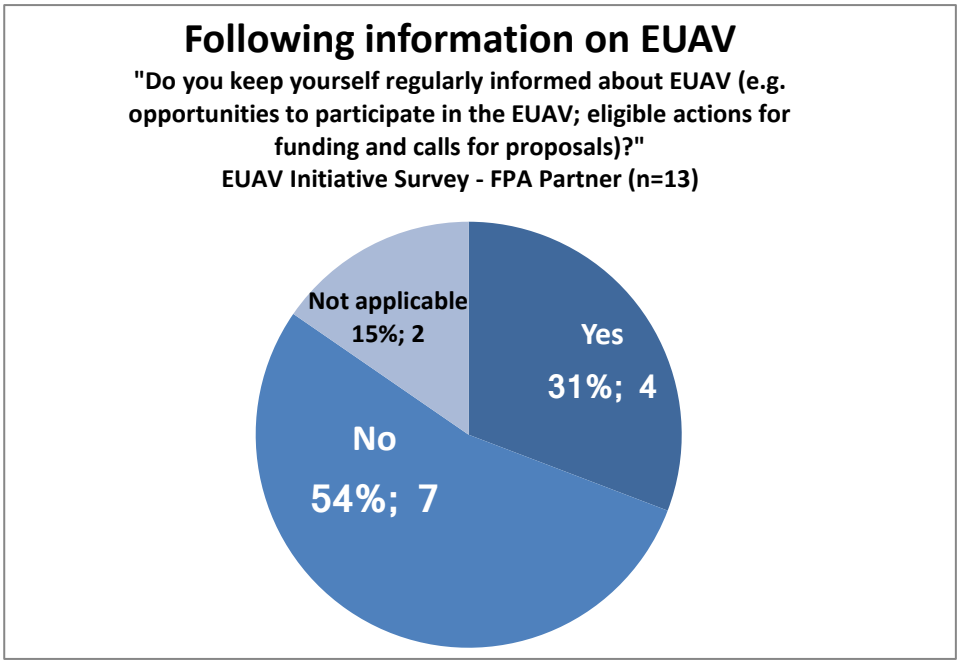
Important remark: The number of respondents (n) varies as sometimes no answer was provided by a respondent in relation to a specific item. Discrepancies between the result figures and the number of respondents occur because there were items for which multiple responses were possible.

Involvement of volunteers

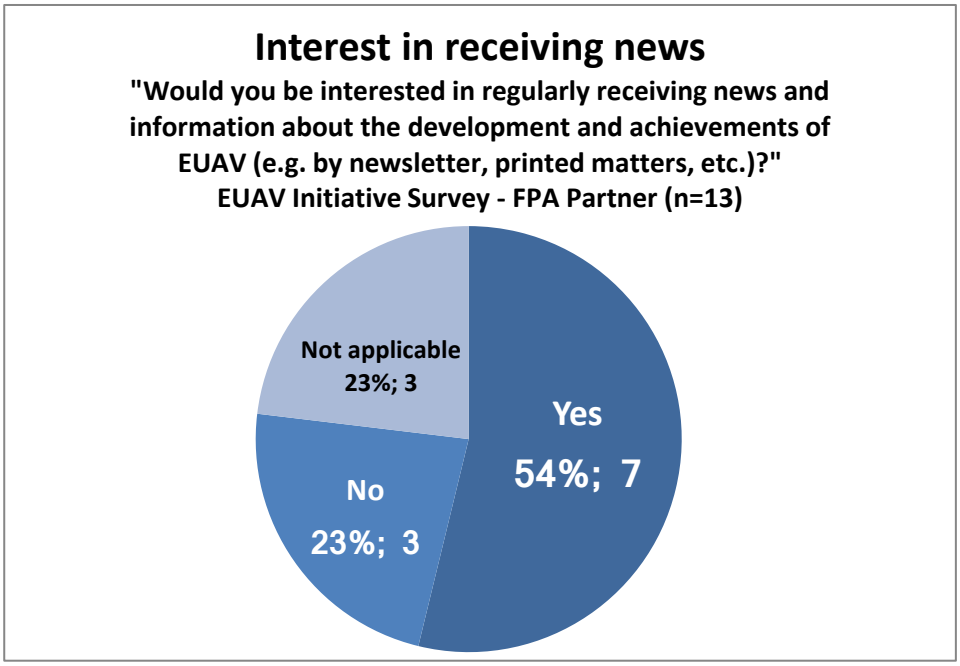


Remark: multiple answers possible

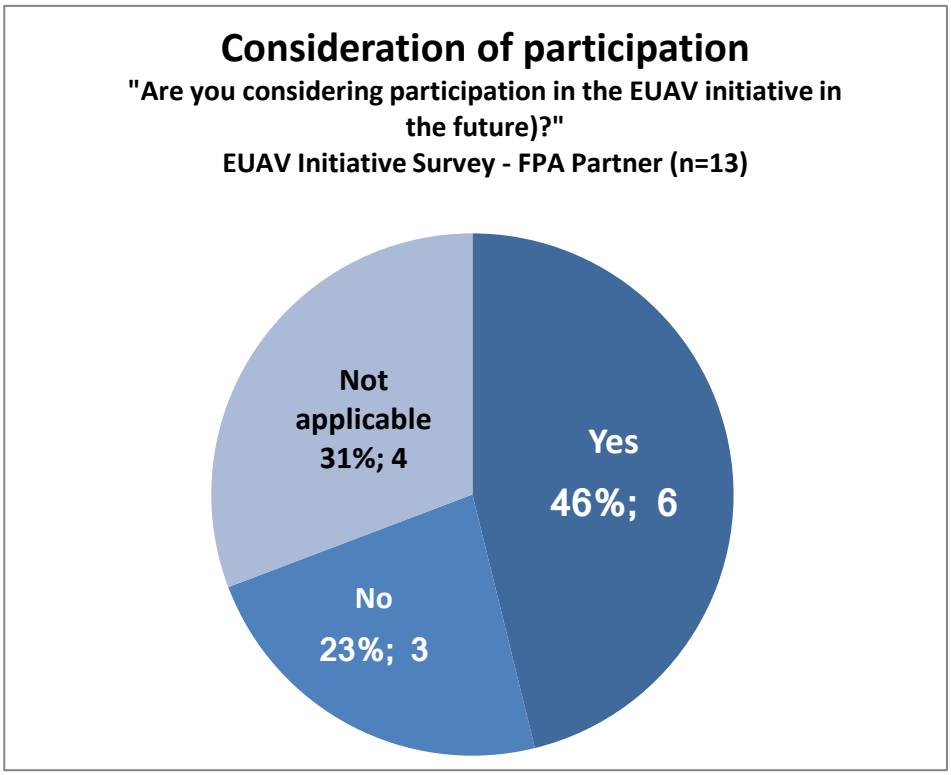
Following developments and events related to EUAV



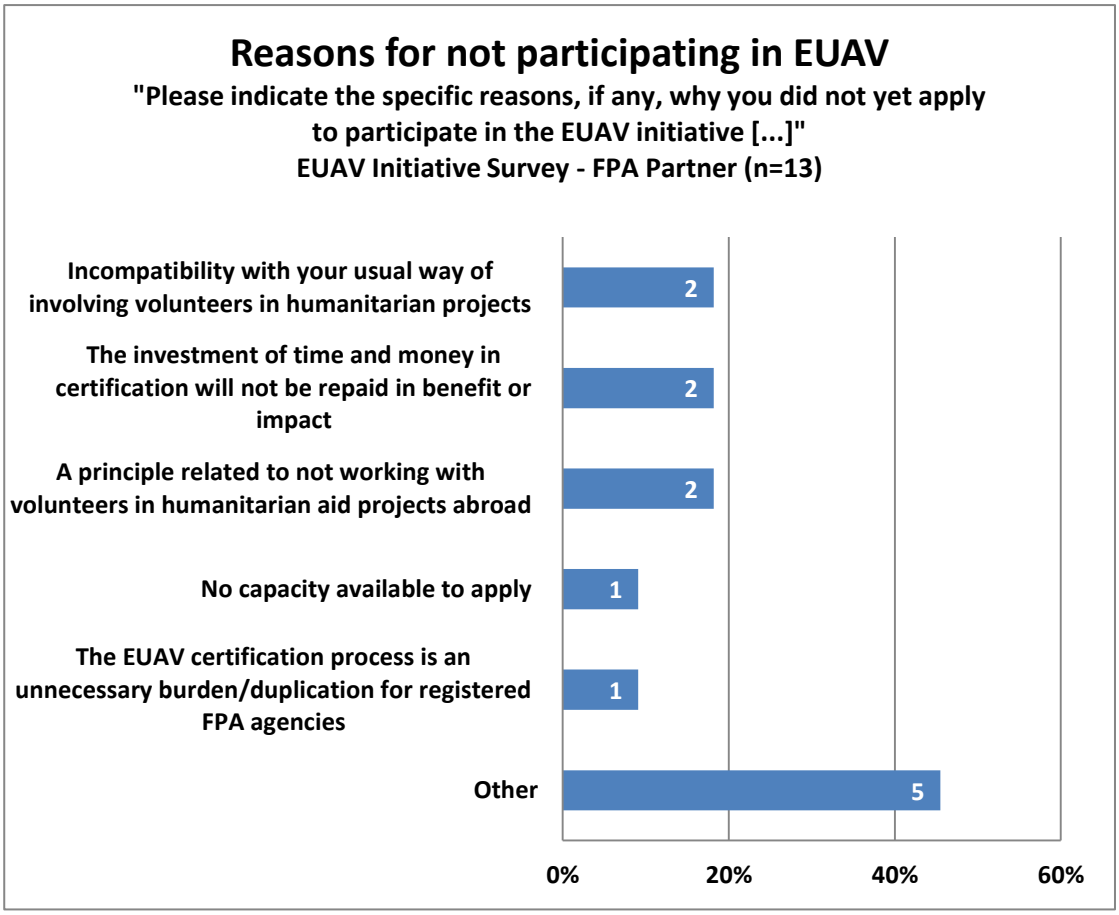
Interest in receiving news



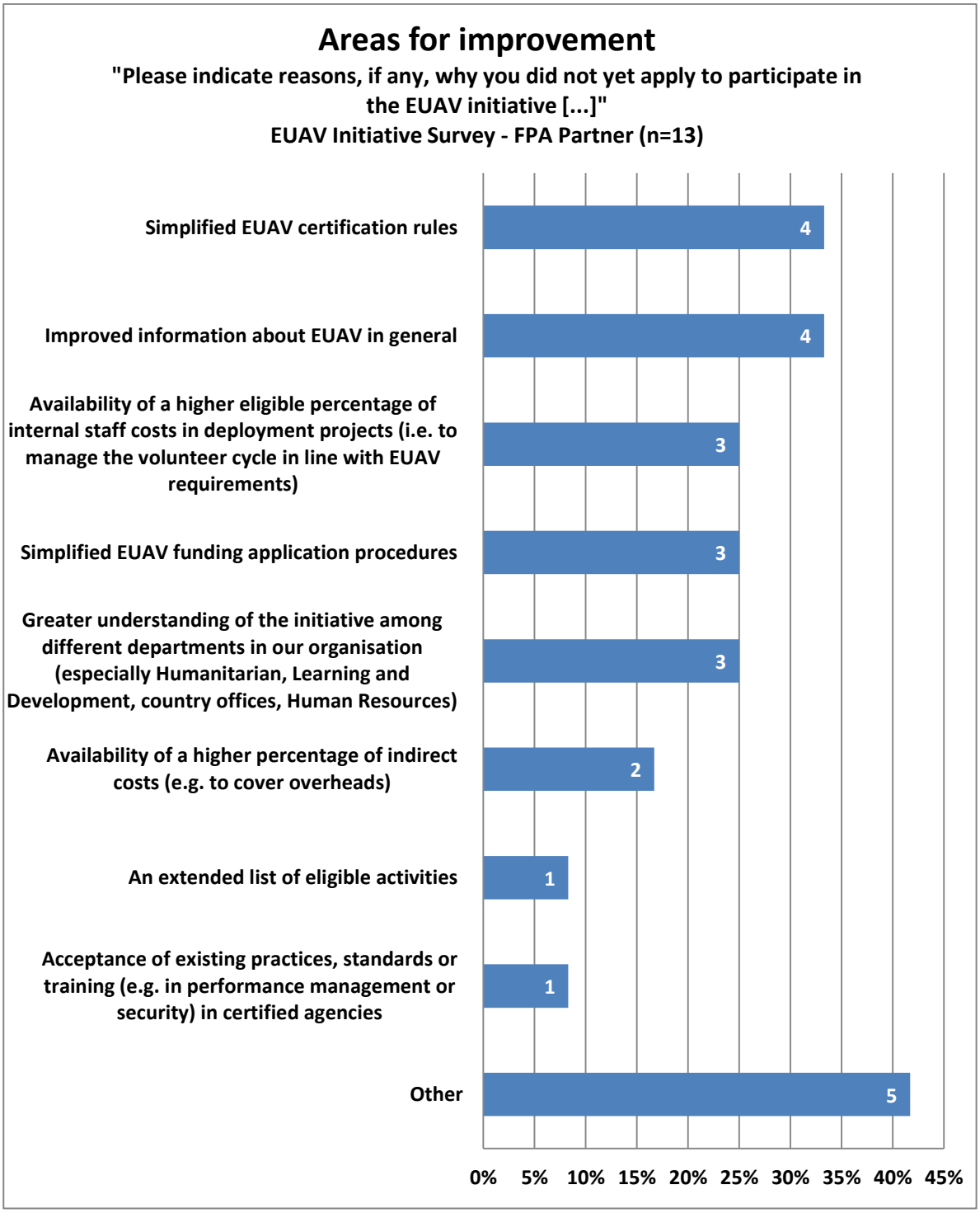
Consideration of participation



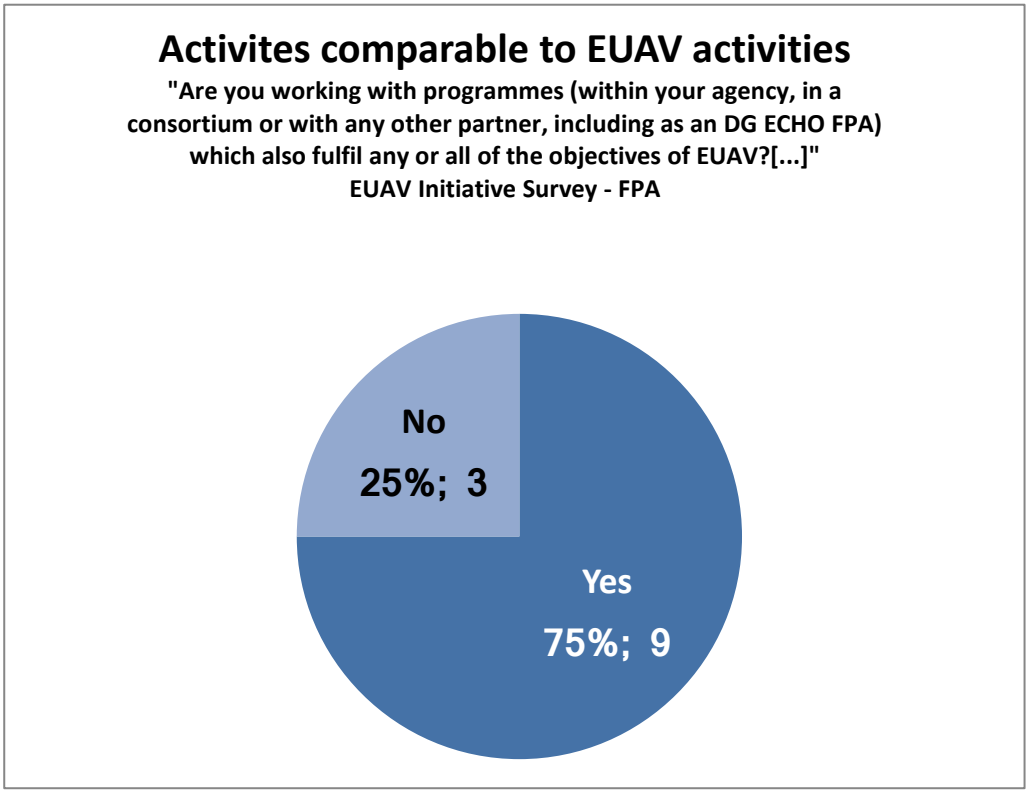
Reasons for not participating in EUAV



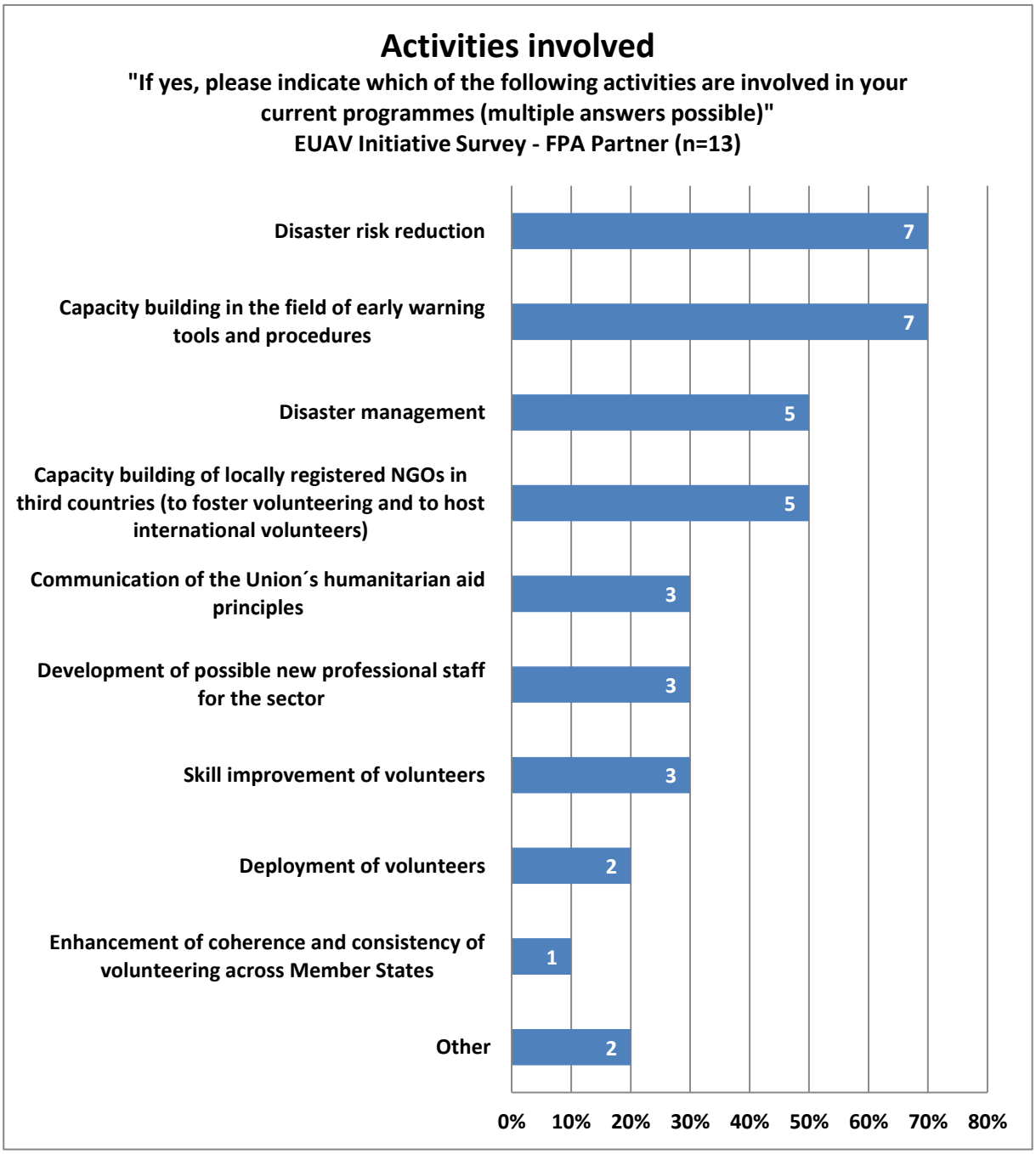
Areas for improvement / simplification



Activities comparable to EUAV activities



Field of activity



Remark: multiple answers possible

11.5 Survey for Member States representatives

Responses to the Member States survey

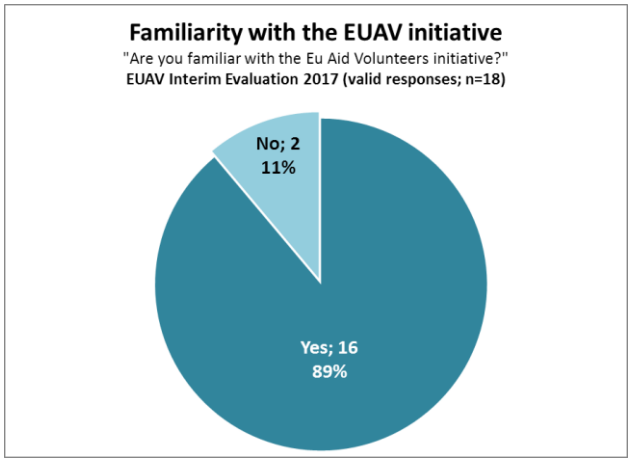
The Member States survey was organised as a paper based survey. DG ECHO successfully organised the invitation and the reminding process. Altogether, 18 Member State representatives answered the survey. Some of them related to two or more committee memberships. These 18 responses represent 27 members of different committees / working parties (8 HAC, 13 COHAFA, and 6 ProCIV).

Important remark: The number of respondents (n) varies as sometimes no answer was provided by a respondent in relation to a specific item.

Survey results:

Level of familiarity with EUAV

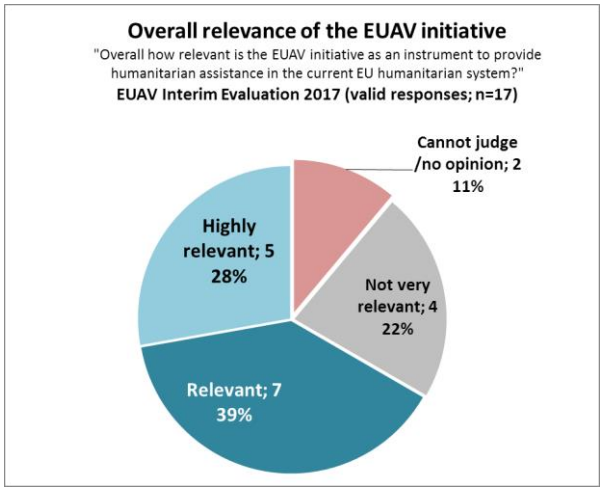
Question: Are you familiar with the EU Aid Volunteers initiative?



➔ **The large majority of the respondents is familiar with the EU Aid Volunteers initiative.**

Overall relevance of EUAV

Question: Overall how relevant is the EUAV Initiative as an instrument to provide humanitarian assistance in the current EU humanitarian system?

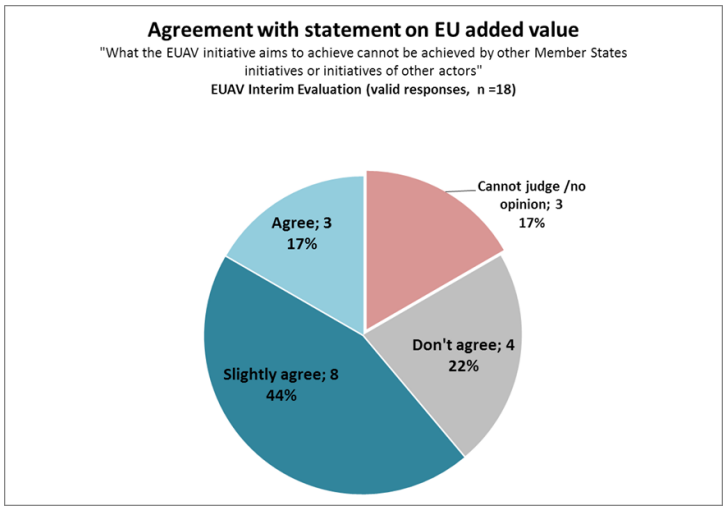


➔ Two thirds of the respondents consider the EUAV Initiative as a relevant instrument to provide humanitarian assistance in the EU humanitarian system.

EU Added Value

Questions: In how far do you agree to the following statement on EU added value?

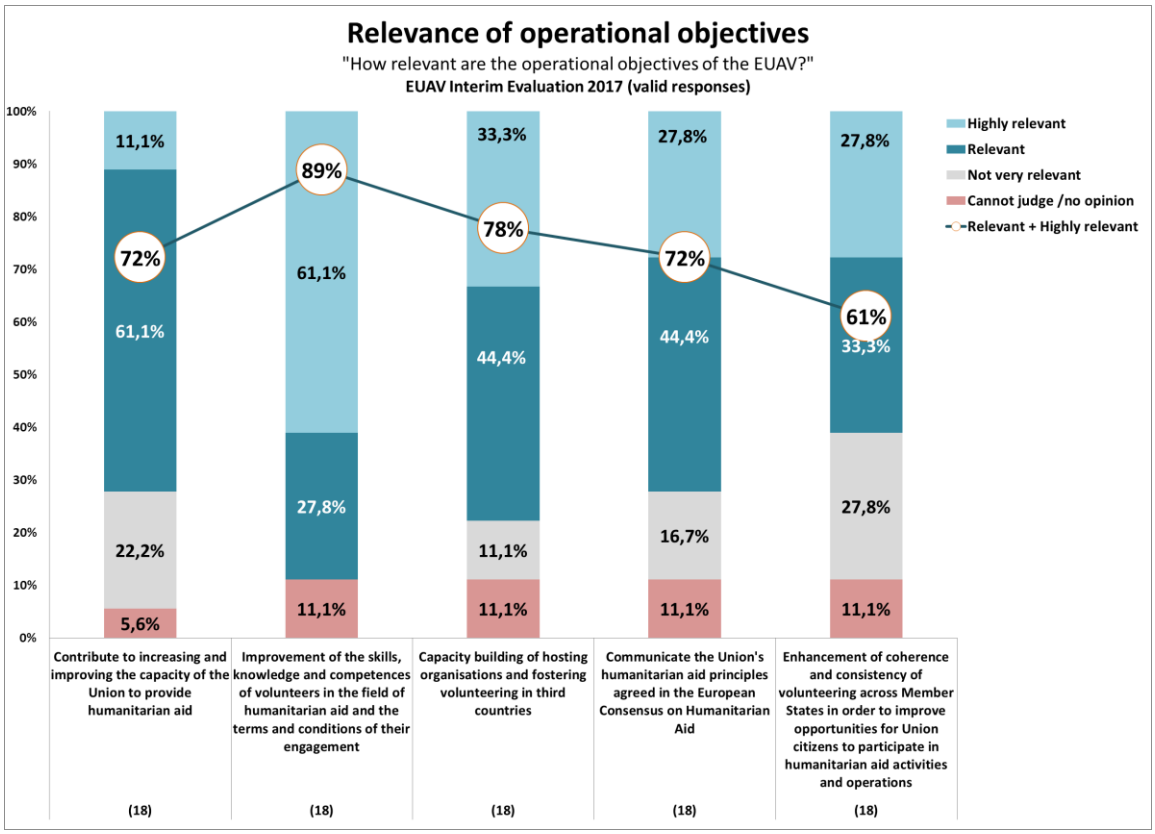
"What the EUAV initiative aims to achieve cannot be achieved by other Member States initiatives or initiatives of other actors"



➔ **3 out of 18 representatives stated that the aims of the initiative cannot be achieved by other Member States.** 8 out of 18 respondents slightly agree to this statement and 4 do not at all agree to this statement.

Relevance of EUAV operational objectives

Question: How relevant are the operational objectives of the EUAV?



➔ Amongst the five operational objectives of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative, the Member States representatives rank the skill development of volunteers the highest (89% or 16 out of 18 respondents), followed by the relevance to the host organisation capacity building (78% or 14 of 18) and the contribution to the Union´s communication efforts related to humanitarian aid principles (72% or 13 of 18).

Annex 12 - Results of the Open Public Consultation

An Open Public Consultation (OPC) was organised in the context of the interim evaluation of the European Aid Volunteers Initiative (EUAV). The objective of the Open Public Consultation was to give EU citizens and all concerned stakeholders an opportunity to express their views on the performance of the EUAV Initiative during the first three years of its implementation.

At the end of July 2017, the European Commission (EC) launched the Open Public Consultation (OPC) on the implementation and performance of the EUAV Initiative. The consultation period ran for a full three months (until 31st October 2017) and was available to individuals, public and private organisations.

The EUAV OPC was available in two different versions: one designed for respondents who felt they had limited or no in-depth knowledge, and a second for those with knowledge of the EUAV Initiative. The survey asked specific questions and provided the opportunity for free-text responses.

Participation

In total the OPC led to 11 answers for the survey from respondents without in-depth knowledge about the Initiative, and 19 answers to the survey from respondents with some knowledge of EUAV.

In addition, respondents were given an opportunity to provide position papers. One position paper was received (from FOCSIV Italy, an EUAV-certified Sending Organisation); this paper was provided to DG ECHO for consideration and separate publication.

Limitations

Some limitations of the Open Public Consultation should be considered when interpreting the its findings.

- There is a very limited number of respondents (30 in total for both surveys)
- The respondents to the survey opted in (decided themselves to participate or the other invitees not to participate). As a result, there is a clear opt-in bias and the results cannot be called representative.
- The majority of the respondents to the survey for informed participants are either EUAV-certified sending organisations (9 out of 15 organisational respondents) or EUAV hosting organisations (2 out of 15). So the results as a whole represent the views of implementing stakeholders rather than stakeholders the evaluation had not reached in other ways

Respondents to the surveys provided a large number of comments which cannot all be presented in detail but which have informed the EUAV evaluation. The key results of both OPC surveys are presented below. Information, such as the original data set with the totality of responses and comments of FOCSIV have been provided to DG ECHO along with the position paper for information and consideration.

12.1 OPC results from respondents with in-depth knowledge about EUAV

The results presented hereafter relate to **respondents with in-depth knowledge** about EUAV (a second survey captured the opinion of less-informed respondents).

Summary findings

Altogether, 19 responses to the survey were provided by 15 organisations and 4 individual respondents. Most of the institutional respondents are EUAV certified sending or hosting organisations. Therefore the results as a whole pre-dominantly represent the opinion of EUAV implementing stakeholders.

Information about EUAV

The large majority of respondents are positive about the quality and completeness of information about EUAV (84% of the respondents). Related free text comments indicate that all necessary information about EUAV is available on the websites but suggest presenting it in less complex language and structure, and in a single place / on one single website. The preferred channels of information for further information on the Initiative are the EUAV platform / website and meetings and events.

Relevance of EUAV

Addressing needs - The majority of the respondents are not convinced that EUAV addresses the actual needs for DRM and Resilience in third countries. Only 36 % of the respondents indicate that the needs are addressed to a large extent or fully. Comments indicated that some respondents see a high potential in engaging skilled volunteers but at present, see more focus on volunteering aspects and less on impact / community impact. Others indicate that the profile of EUAV is not sharp enough (e.g. not clear if it is about learning opportunities for volunteers or local community capacity improvement in DRM).

Adding value to existing EU schemes - About 58% of the respondents are convinced that EUAV adds value to the existing national volunteering efforts in the EU. Some responses highlight the fact that many opportunities to engage as a volunteer in third countries exist, but mainly in development assistance. EUAV adds the humanitarian volunteering component to it, particularly with its established standards. Several respondents comment on the high potential of EUAV to show solidarity. In order to further improve the added value, one organisation strongly suggests including a reciprocal approach to EUAV.

Response capacity of the Union - A clear majority of the respondents agree that volunteering is a suitable approach to improve the Union´s response capacity (63%). The majority of these answers highlight the importance of volunteering (particularly local volunteering) in humanitarian response and the potential to improve response capacities by involving EUAV volunteers. At the same time, respondents stress the fact that European volunteers need to be professionals to add value in the third countries they are active in.

Impact on the image of the EU - Most respondents agree that there is a positive impact on the image of the EU through EUAV (58%). In free text comments, several respondents highlight that there is a good potential to improve the image of the EU in third countries, but at the same time, state that the volunteers need to address concrete needs and that any positive impact depends on

their skills, attitude and on the added value they bring to the communities. However some critical voices indicate that there needs to be a stronger involvement of local volunteers in the Initiative.

Impact of EUAV volunteers

When looking at the different areas of EUAV impact the most impactful area identified by the respondents is the "personal development of the volunteer" (94% of the respondents agree), followed by the "impact on local communities" (74% agreement) and "the image of the European Union" (74%). The impacts the respondents agreed with least were "availability of aid workers in the future" and "impact on national volunteers in third countries". However, all 7 aspects of impact received well above 50% positive ratings. Several respondents indicated that it is too early in the programme to conclude on impact.

Coherence

Respondents to the OPC have a mixed opinion on the coherence of EUAV with other EU activities. Coherence with other DRM (55% agreement) and Community Resilience (53%) focused activities of the EU is seen as relatively high but the coherence with EU civil protection and other EU volunteering initiatives is seen as relatively low. The respondents see the potential for coherence as EUAV addresses humanitarian needs as well as issues more related to civil protection. However, at present many respondents do not see a practical alignment with either of these fields (i.e. field offices of DG ECHO are not involved, and there are no obvious links with DRR projects funded by DG DEVCO).

EU Added value

The assessment of EU Added Value of EUAV varies with the aspect analysed. Higher ratings are received related to the aspect "strengthening of capacities of humanitarian organisations at EU level" (63% agreement) and "adding value through a set of standards" (58%). Lower levels of agreement are visible for "needs cannot be addressed by other existing EU volunteering schemes" (33% agreement) or "needs cannot be addressed by other national volunteering schemes" (37% agreement). The majority of the comments highlight the standards as the main achievement and added value of EUAV at European level, while some others indicate that bringing together EU organisations by encouraging collaboration and information-sharing on volunteer management (e.g. the technical assistance component of EUAV) is a clear added value of the Initiative.

Effectiveness

With respect to the effectiveness of achieving EUAV operational objectives, respondents are in general quite critical. The best ratings are given to the effectiveness of "improving skills and knowledge of volunteers", 63% of the respondents agree that EUAV was effective in achieving this objective. All other aspects receive less than 50% agreement. Particularly the EUAV impact on "increased awareness" (26% agreement) and the "enhancement of coherence and consistency of humanitarian volunteering in the EU" (32% agreement) is doubted. Several respondents highlight that it is too early to judge on the effectiveness after only 3 years of the programme and with only a few volunteers yet returned and projects finalised. For some respondents the certification and application process is in need of improvement to stimulate further engagement and to reduce exclusion of organisations.

Efficiency

The efficiency of EUAV in the context of "building volunteers´ skills and competences" is evaluated as high by a clear majority of respondents (79% agree) and another 68% of the respondents are of the opinion that volunteering abroad has a significant "positive impact on the career development of the EUAV volunteers". Related to the objectives "to develop DRR capacities in third countries" and "to build resilient communities" only 42 % of the respondents in both cases agree that EUAV is an efficient mechanism. Comments provided by the respondents are quite varied but two statements highlight areas of identified inefficiencies: in one case the complex procedural framework, and second the limited flexibility in deployment (e.g. minimum requirement of 4 weeks for deployments).

Capacity Building

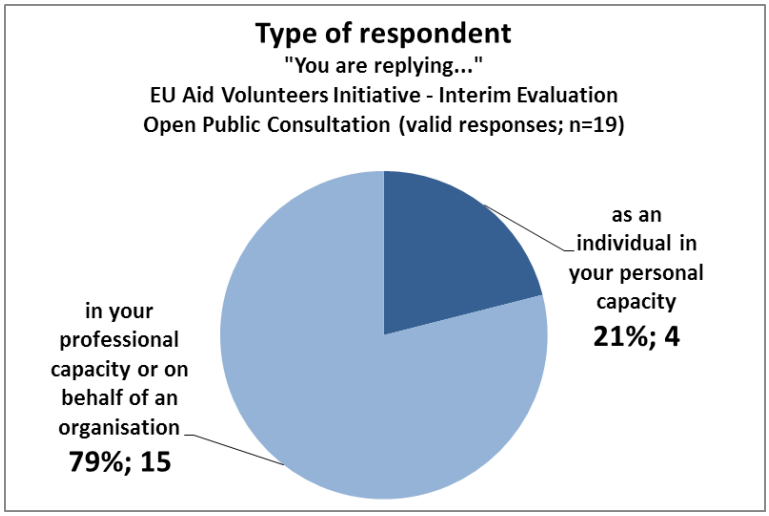
More than 68% of the respondents are convinced that capacity building provided by EUAV projects has the potential to contribute to resilience building in host communities. Respondents are convinced that there is a high potential to improve resilience through EUAV volunteers or have even experienced positive impact through their work using EUAV funding. There is a clear consensus that the critical success factor is a proper needs assessment at local level involving local organisations and communities.

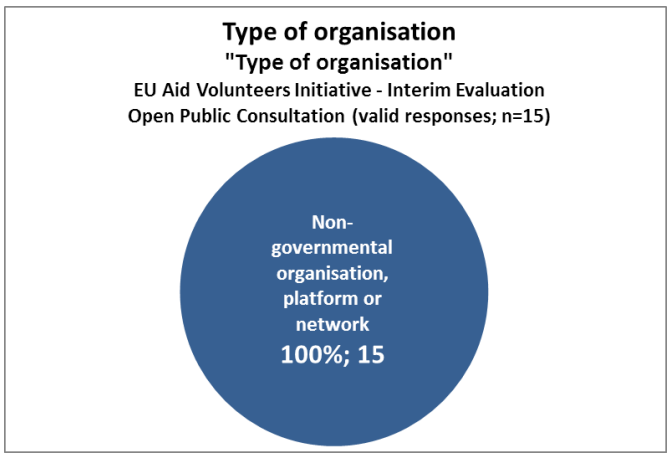
Technical Assistance

Only 42 % of the respondents agree that EUAV technical assistance to EU organisations improve the response capacity of the EU as a whole. The majority of the comments confirm that the certification process improves volunteer management practices but at the same time is perceived as complicated and that the technical assistance concentrated on improving volunteer management and assisting organisations to become EUAV certified – this is not seen by the respondents as a direct contribution to the improvement of the EU response capacity.

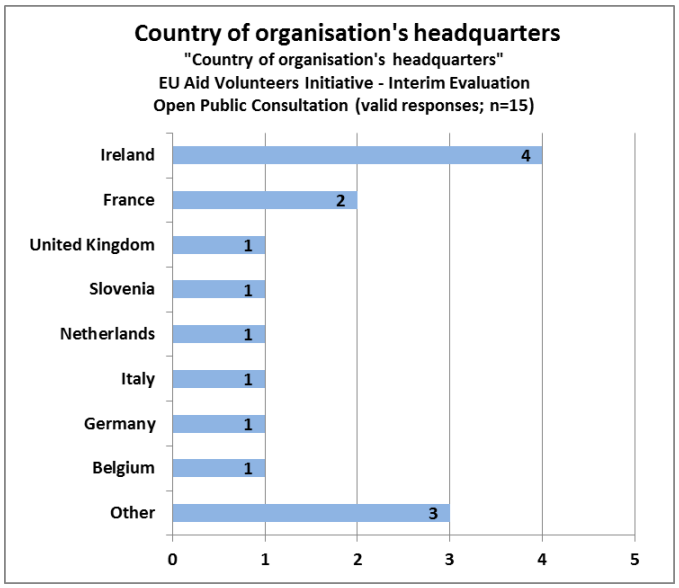
Respondents to the survey

Altogether, 19 responses have been received from 15 organisations and 4 individual respondents. 9 out of the 15 organisational responses come from EUAV certified EU organisations and 2 out of 15 from EUAV certified third country partners. All of the 15 organisational responses are from NGOs.

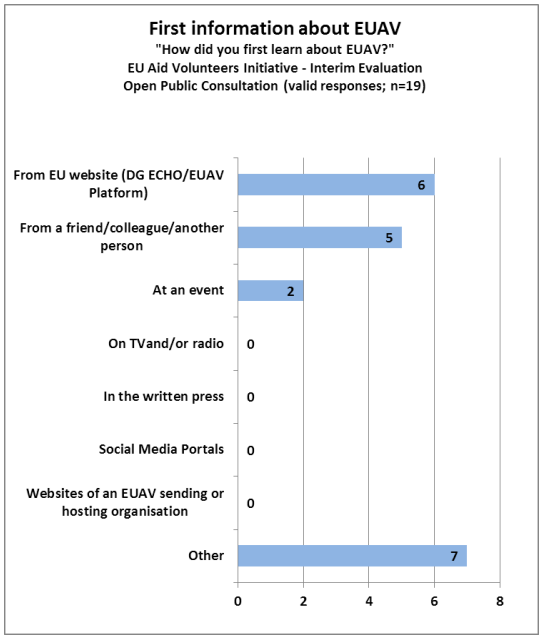




➔ All institutional respondents to the OPC are from non-governmental organisations



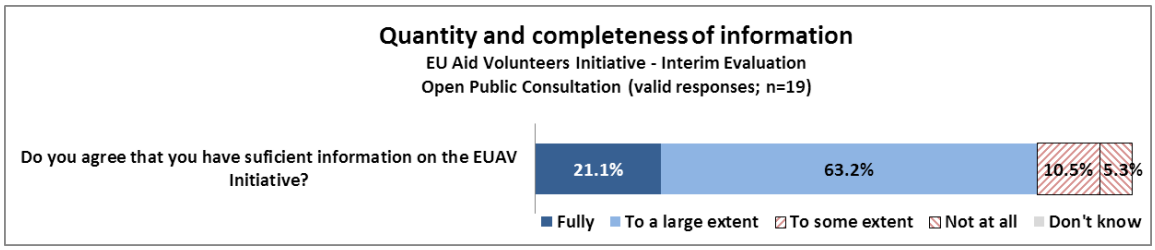
Information about EUAV



Remark: multiple answers possible

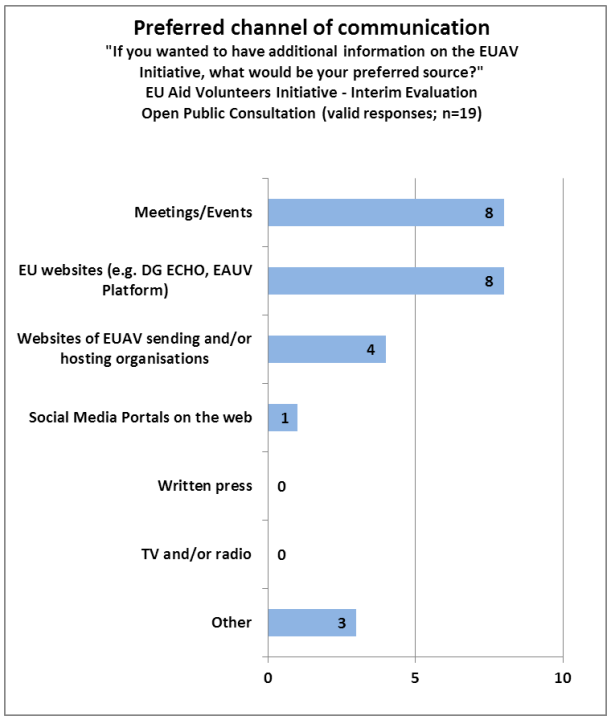
➔ "Others" are mostly EUAV partners and therefore informed implementing stakeholders.

Do you feel that you have sufficient information on the EUAV initiative?



- ➔ The large majority of respondents are positive about the quality and completeness of information (84% of the respondents)
- ➔ Free text comments indicate that all information about EUAV is available on the websites but suggest presenting it in less complex language and structure, and in a single place / on one single website

If you wanted to have additional information on the EUAV initiative, what would be your preferred source?



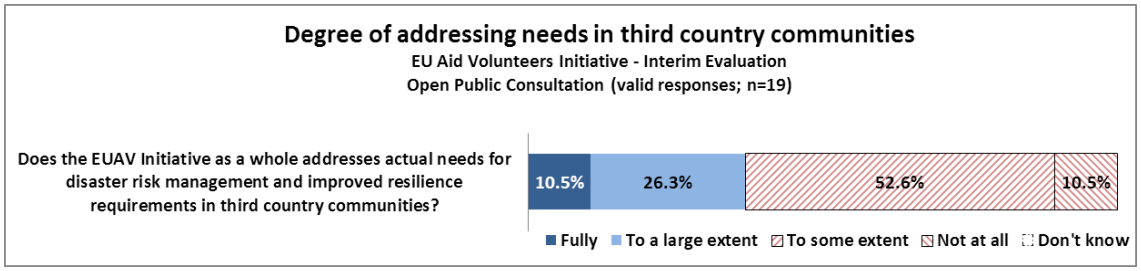
Remark: multiple answers possible

- ➔ Preferred channels of information on EUAV are the EU website of EUAV, and meetings and events.

Relevance of EUAV

Addressing needs in third country communities

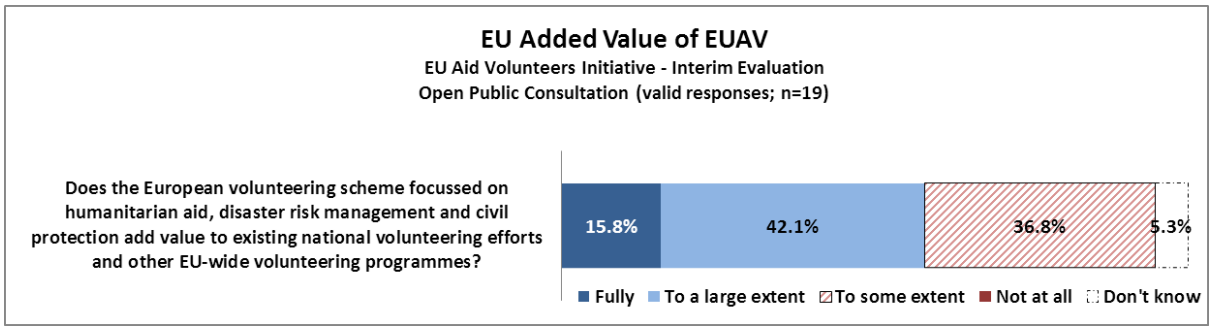
Does the EUAV initiative as a whole address actual needs **for disaster risk management (DRM) and improved resilience requirements** in third country communities?



- ➔ The majority of the respondents doubt that EUAV addresses actual needs for DRM and Resilience in third countries. Only 36 % of the respondents indicate that needs are addressed to a large extent or fully.
- ➔ The 16 free text comments of the respondents are very mixed. However, the respondents see a high potential in engaging skilled volunteers but at present see more focus on volunteering aspects and less on impact / community impact. Others indicate that the profile of EUAV is not sharp enough (e.g. not clear if it is about learning opportunities for volunteers or local community capacity improvement in DRM capacities).

EU Added Value of EUAV

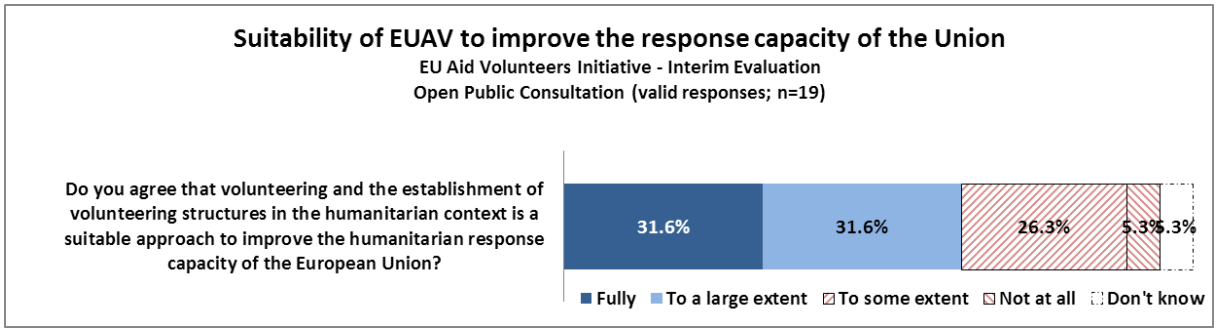
Does a European volunteering scheme focussed on humanitarian aid, disaster risk management and civil protection **add value** to existing national volunteering efforts and other EU-wide volunteering programmes?



- ➔ About 58% of the respondents are convinced that EUAV adds value to existing national volunteering efforts in the EU.
- ➔ Respondents provided 8 free text comments. Some responses highlight the fact that there are already many opportunities to engage as a volunteer in third countries but mainly in development assistance. EUAV adds the humanitarian volunteering component to it, also with its established standards. Several respondents comment on the high potential of EUAV to show solidarity. In order to further improve the added value, one organisation strongly suggests including a reciprocal approach to EUAV.

Improvement of the response capacity of the European Union

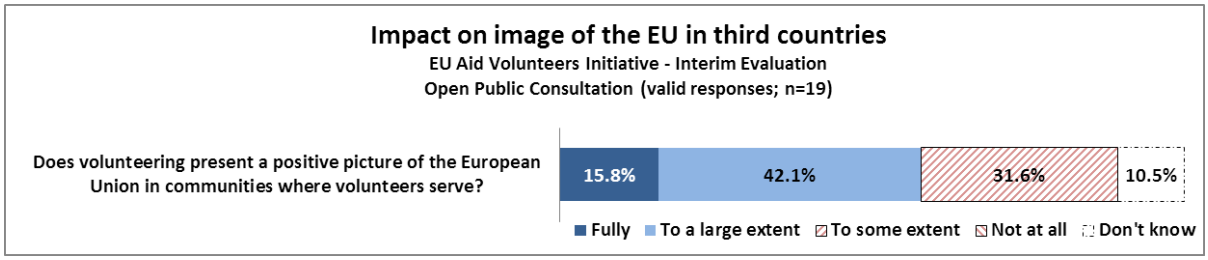
Is volunteering and the establishment of volunteering structures in the humanitarian context a **suitable approach to improve the humanitarian response capacity** of the European Union?



- ➔ A clear majority of the respondents agree that volunteering is a suitable approach to improve the Union´s response capacity (63%).
- ➔ Respondents provided 14 free text comments. The majority of these responses highlight the importance of volunteering (particularly local volunteering) in humanitarian response and the potential to improve response capacities by involving EUAV volunteers. At the same time respondents stress the fact that European volunteers need to be professionals to add value in the third countries they are active in. Critical voices however noted issues like:
  - The approach of EUAV is doubted in terms of efficiency: "The current design of EUAV lean towards an expensive humanitarian internship programme"
  - Alignment / coherence with regular humanitarian assistance is weak: "The EU has very significant humanitarian projects around the world, but in the current set up, Aid Volunteers hardly have any contact with such initiatives."

EUAV Impact on the image of the EU in third countries

Does volunteering present **a positive picture of the European Union in communities** where volunteers serve?

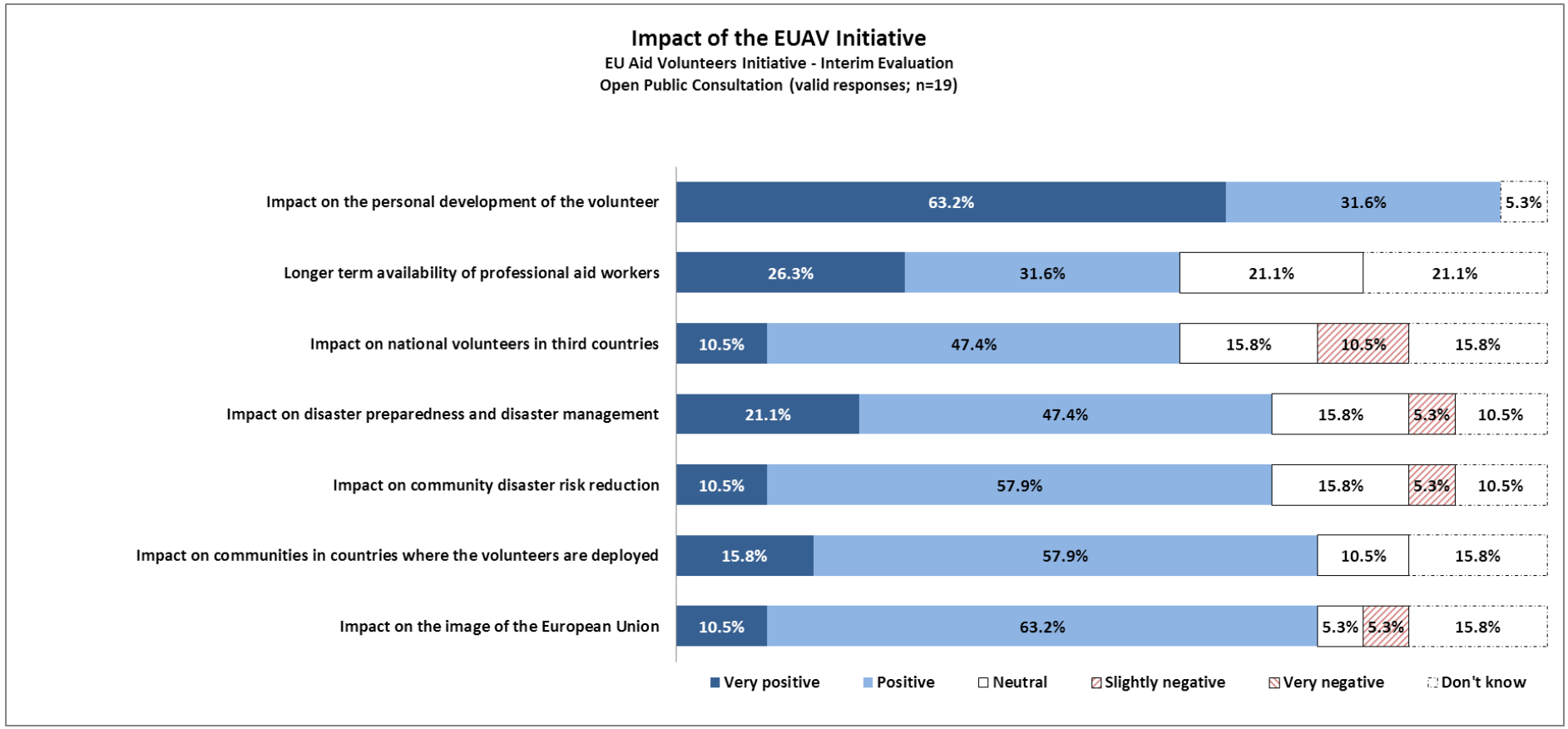


- ➔ Most respondents agree that there is a positive impact on the image of the EU through EUAV (58%).

The respondents provided 15 comments related to this question. Several respondents highlight that there is a good potential to improve the image of the EU in third countries, but at the same time state that the volunteers need to address concrete needs and any positive impact is depending on their skills, attitude and the added value they bring to the communities. However some critical voices indicate that there needs to be a stronger involvement of local volunteers in the Initiative: *"Volunteering is undoubtedly valued and respected by communities and organisations where volunteers serve, and rightly so. … it is important that the EUAV explores more seriously ways in which volunteering is not restricted to EU nationals and residents. South-to -South and local volunteering should also be included in this initiative under the EUAV framework. Given the "special status" enjoyed by the EU Aid Volunteers, it is unclear how this foments national volunteering.*

Impact of EUAV volunteers

How do you rate the **impact of the involvement of volunteers in humanitarian assistance** for the following aspects?

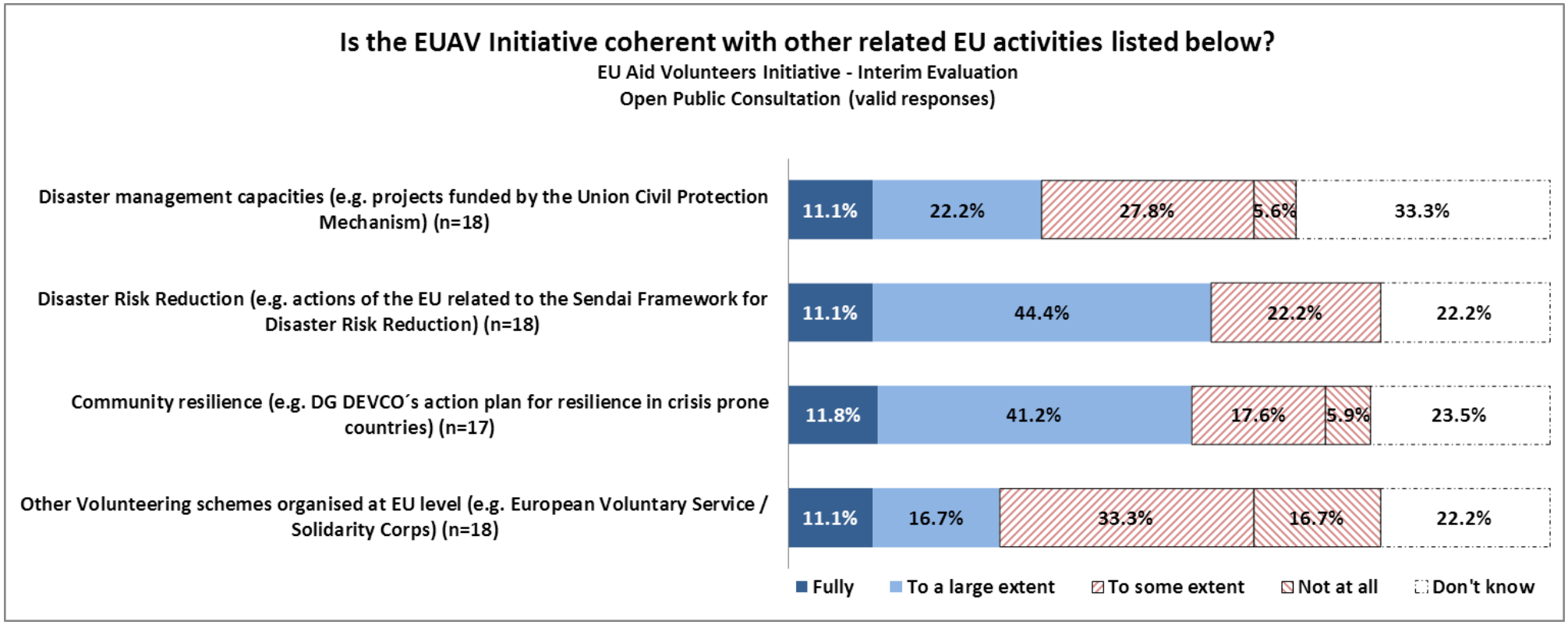


➔ When looking at the different areas of EUAV impact, the most important area of impact identified by the respondents is the "personal development of the volunteer" (94% of the respondents agree), followed by the "impact on local communities" (74%) and "the image of the European Union" (74%). The impacts the respondents agreed with least were "availability of aid workers in the future" and "impact on national volunteers in third countries". However, the level of agreement is always well above 50% related to all addressed aspects.

➔ The respondents provided 12 comments related to the impact of EUAV. Many highlight the positive impact on the volunteers themselves and the potential impact on the availability of humanitarian professionals in the future (e.g. EUAV volunteers becoming professional humanitarian workers). It was clearly stated that it is too early to comment on the project level impact of the deployments: *"…it seems difficult to evaluate the impact of the programme on volunteers or communities involved after only 7 months of deployment. Moreover, the first volunteers only start coming back in August this year."*

Coherence

Is the EUAV initiative coherent with other related EU activities listed below?



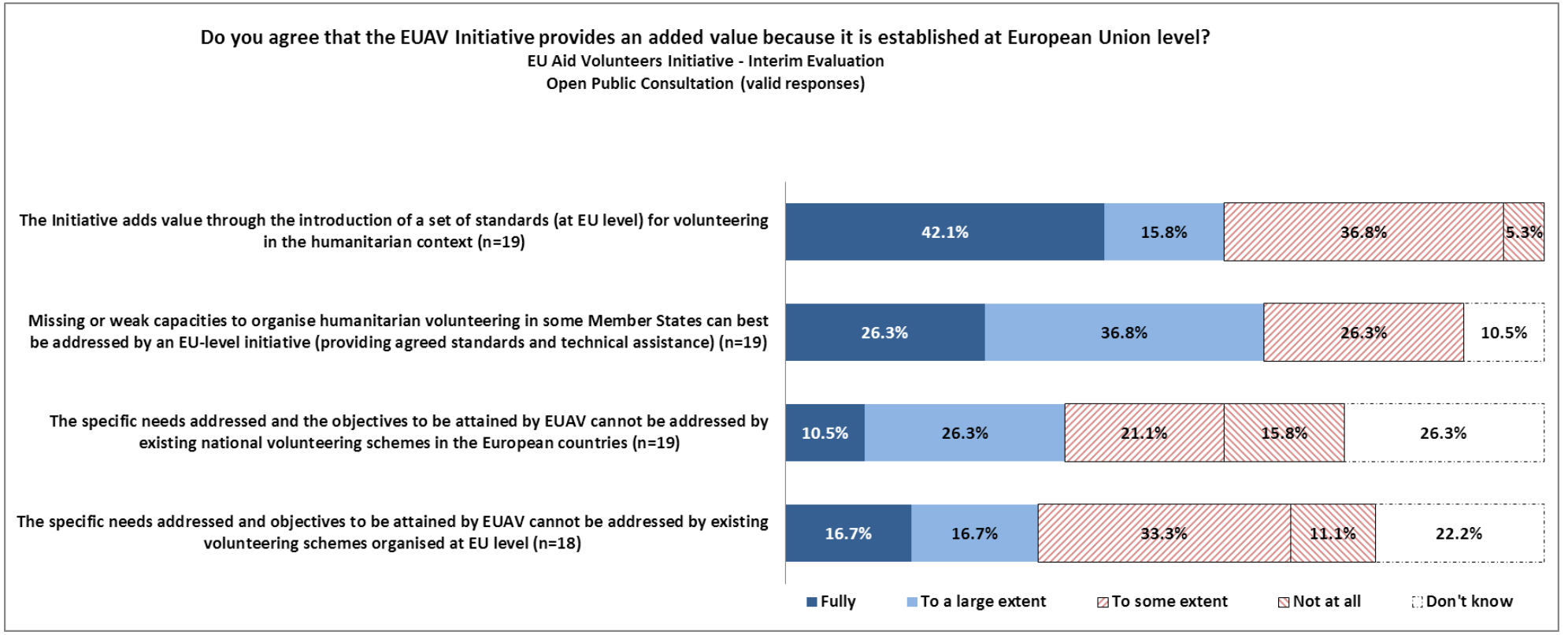
➔ Respondents to the OPC have a varied opinion on the coherence of EUAV with other EU activities. Coherence with other DRR focused activities of the EU and Community Resilience activities is seen as relatively high (55% and respectively 53% of the respondents agree) but the coherence with EU civil protection and other EU volunteering initiatives is seen as relatively low.

➔ Altogether, 10 comments were provided by the respondents to the OPC. The respondents see the potential for coherence as EUAV addresses humanitarian needs as well as issues more related to civil protection. However, at present many respondents do not see a practical alignment with both of these fields (i.e. field offices of DG ECHO not involved, no obvious links with DRR projects funded by DG DEVCO). One respondent

summarises this thus: “Currently, the EUAV initiatives finances programmes [which] have similar objectives with more traditional Resilience or DRR projects funded by DG ECHO or DG DEVCO. However direct links between those are not obvious. And given that the Sendai EU Action plan is under now under DG DEVCO leadership and resilience prominently fits in the SDGs and the EU consensus on development, it would seem more logical if the EUAV was managed and funded by DG DEVCO.”

EU Added Value

Does the EUAV initiative provide added value due to the fact that it is organised at European Union level? To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

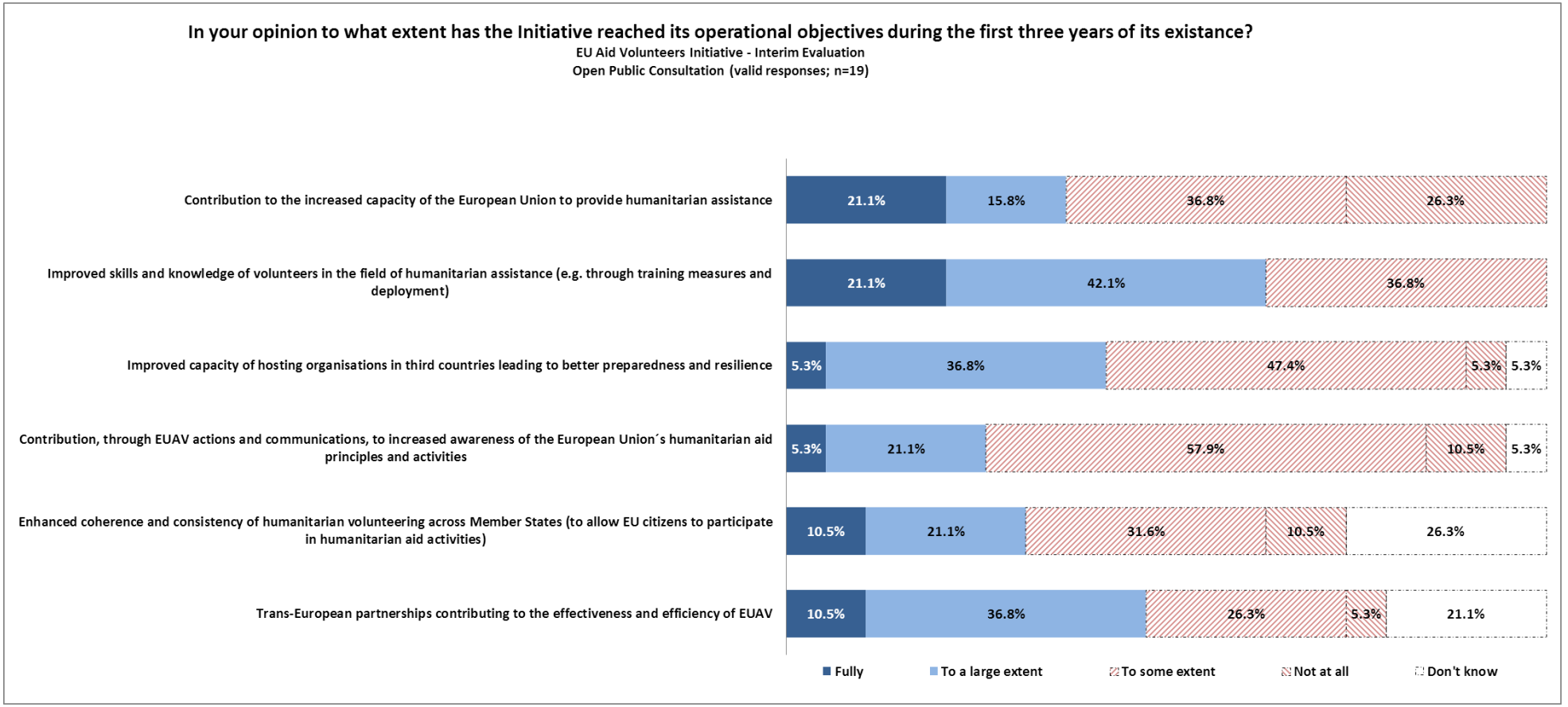


- ➔ The assessment of EU Added Value of EUAV varies depending on the aspect analysed. Higher ratings are given to the aspect "strengthening of capacities of humanitarian organisations at EU level" and "adding value through a set of standards" (63% and respectively 58% agreement by respondents). Lower levels of agreement are visible in the context of "needs cannot be addressed by other existing EU volunteering schemes" (33% agreement) or "needs cannot be addressed by other national volunteering schemes" (37% agreement).
- ➔ The respondents provided 14 comments related to EU Added Value. The majority highlight the standards as the main achievement and added value of EUAV at European level, while others indicate that bringing together EU organisations in collaboration and information sharing on volunteer

management (e.g. the technical assistance component of EUAV) is a clear added value of the Initiative. One respondent expressed it as follows*: "**We see particular added value in the initiative's capacity to bring together European organisations**, encouraging collaboration and information sharing. In our case it provided practical opportunities for working more closely with and learning from other European sister agencies. On a practical level, if successful with our deployment application, it will also allow us to reach out to a wider European pool of prospective future staff (particularly beneficial in relation to some of the specific language skill sets that we need as an organisation)."*

Effectiveness

Did the EUAV initiative reach its operational objectives in the first three years of its existence? In your opinion, to what extent were the following objectives reached?

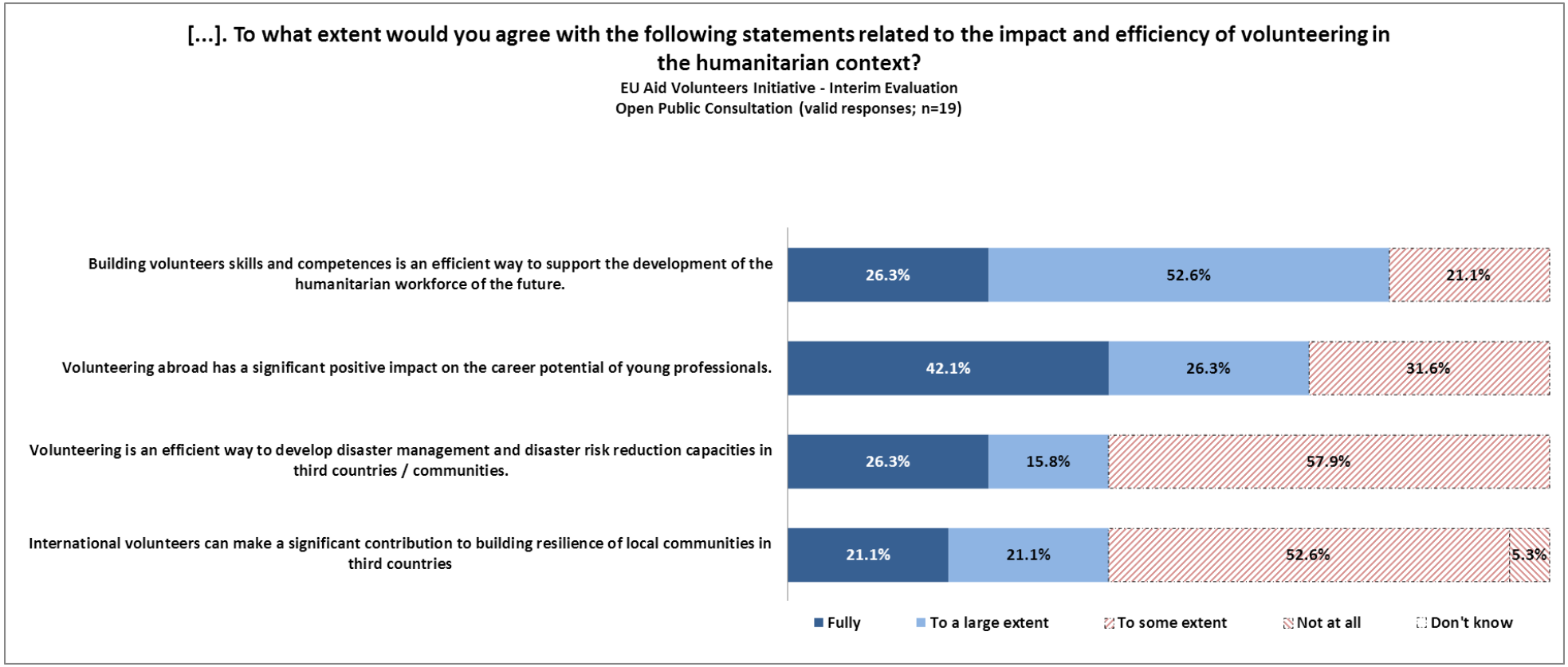


➔ With respect to the effectiveness of achieving EUAV operational objectives, respondents are in general quite critical. The best ratings are given to the effectiveness of "improving skills and knowledge of volunteers": 63% of the respondents agree that EUAV was effective in achieving this objective. All other aspects receive less than 50% agreement. Particularly the EUAV impact on "increased awareness" (26% agreement) and the "enhancement of coherence and consistency of humanitarian volunteering in the EU" (32% agreement) is doubted. However, in some aspects, the proportion of those not able to judge is quite high.

➔ The respondents provided 10 comments related to effectiveness. Several respondents highlight that it is too early to judge on the effectiveness after only 3 years in the programme and with only a few volunteers returned and projects finalised. For some respondents the certification and application process is in need of improvement to stimulate further engagement and to not exclude organisations. For example: *" It would be helpful to review and improve certification and application process in order to increase access to the EUAV initiative. The many steps involved and the large number of forms and documents to be completed can make the EUAV initiative appear daunting and discourage organisations that could both bring value and benefit from the initiative from applying. Another obstacle for participation in the EAUV initiative for potential hosting organisations in some specific countries is difficulties in obtaining the required visa and work permits. Any support from the EU (local EU Delegations/ DG ECHO) in supporting this would be much appreciated."*

Efficiency

Volunteering has an impact on a range of different people and organisations. To what extent do you agree with the following statements related to the impact and efficiency of volunteering in the humanitarian context?



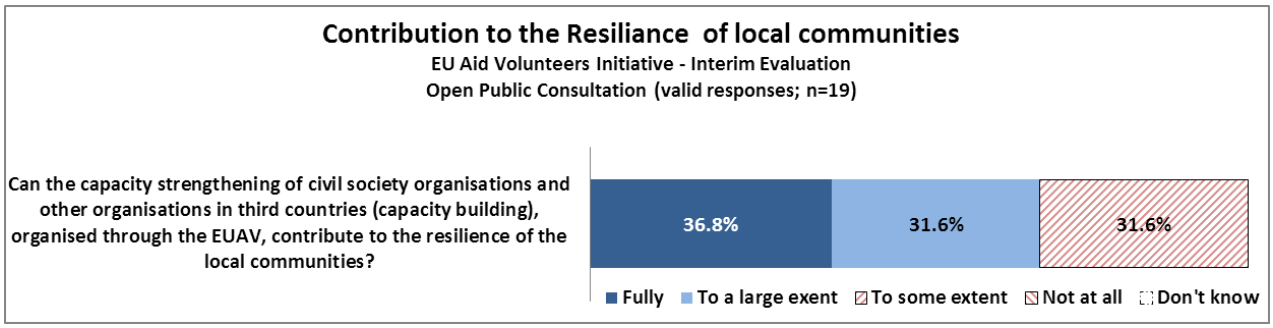
- ➔ The efficiency of EUAV in building volunteers´ skills and competences is seen as high by a clear majority of respondents (79% agree) and another 68% of the respondents are of the opinion that volunteering abroad has a significant positive impact on the career development of the EUAV volunteers. Where it relates to the efficiency to develop DRR capacities in third countries and to build resilient communities however only 42 % of the respondents in both cases agree that EUAV is an efficient mechanism.
- ➔ In total 9 comments related to the efficiency of EUAV were provided by the respondents. These comments are quite varied but two statements highlight areas of identified inefficiencies, which in one case is the complex procedural framework and in the second case limited flexibility in deployment (e.g.. minimum requirement of 4 weeks for deployments). One statement runs as follows: *"A point in the current rules for deployment*

that's can be harmful to efficiency is the inflexible minimum deployment time of four weeks. Experienced volunteers tend to have duties at home that they cannot leave for a time period of this length. Flexibility is necessary, new forms of volunteering such as online volunteering for senior / experienced volunteers should be permitted. Previous project involvements (EVRECA and BEDRIN) showed: short-term (2 week) deployments of senior volunteers can be just as effective in achieving good local results (by instructing volunteers on-site who stayed for longer).Offering new and flexible forms of deployment could lead to more registered organisations and volunteers as well as to stronger involvement of the complete sector of European aid and volunteering stakeholders, bringing EUAV closer to the ideal of European coherence asked about in question 40.Volunteering abroad certainly does not negatively affect careers, yet this potentially positive effect should not be a focus of humanitarian aid."

Capacity building and technical assistance

Capacity Building

Can the capacity strengthening of **civil society organisations and other organisations in third countries** (capacity building), organised through the EUAV, contribute to the resilience of the local communities?

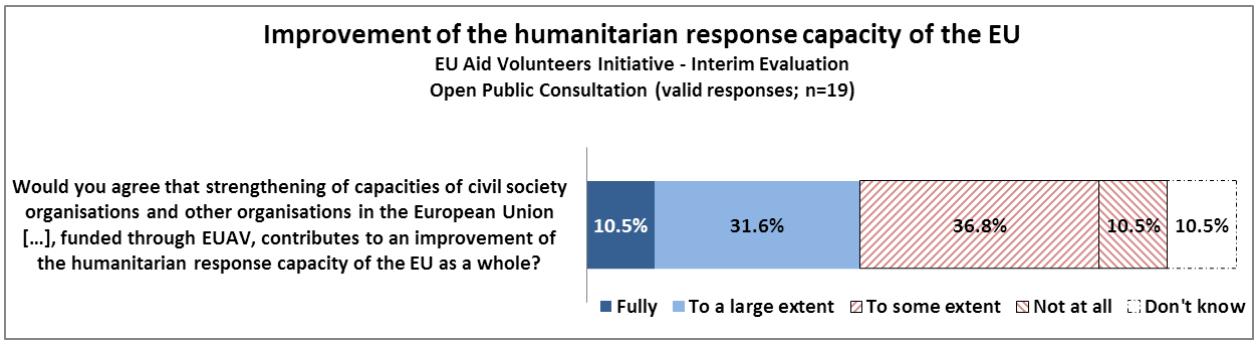


➔ More than 68% of the respondents are convinced that capacity building provided by EUAV projects has the potential to contribute to the resilience of host communities.

➔ 12 comments were provided by the respondents. Respondents are convinced that there is a high potential to improve resilience through EUAV volunteers, or have even experienced positive impact through their work under EUAV funding. There is a clear consensus that all depends on a proper needs assessment at local level involving local organisations and communities. Furthermore, it was highlighted that the processes of learning and building of capacity is impacting on both EU volunteers and local staff and communities: *"A new perspective or introduction of new resources (via a physical volunteer) can significantly improve the capacity of an operation. The two way exchange must be noted that also volunteers are building up their capacity from the placement. Should not always be painted as the expert as this only leads to development of post-colonial structures of inequality*."

Technical Assistance

Can the strengthening of **capacity of civil society organisations and other organisations in the European Union** (technical assistance), funded through EUAV, contribute to an improvement of the humanitarian response capacity of the EU as a whole?



➔ Only 42 % of the respondents agree that EUAV´s technical assistance to EU organisations improves the response capacity of the EU as a whole.

➔ Respondents to the survey provided 11 comments related to TA. The majority of the comments confirm that the certification process improves volunteer management practices but at the same time is complicated - and TA, by concentrating on improving volunteer management and assisting organisations to become EUAV certified, is not seen as a direct contribution to the improvement of the EU response capacity. One response summarised this as follows: *"The extensive certification process definitely improves the volunteer management practices*

however as this is outward looking i.e seeks to enhance the practices of volunteers being send to the global south, it cannot be said that it improves the capacity of the EU as a whole. The EUAVI does not deal with allocating or managing volunteers to respond to humanitarian disasters within the EU and no links are made between enhancing capacities to deal with issues on the doorsteps of countries facing humanitarian crises."

12.2 OPC results from respondents without in-depth knowledge about EUAV

The results presented hereafter relate to **respondents without in-depth knowledge** of EUAV.

Summary findings

Altogether, 11 responses were received from 8 individual respondents and 3 responding organisations.

Information about EUAV

The majority of the respondents had first learnt about EUAV from a friend or from the EU websites. Only a minority feels it has sufficient information on the EUAV Initiative (27%). The most preferred channel of information for further information on EUAV is the internet (EUAV website), followed by the press, TV and radio, and other organisations´ websites.

Different aspects

Added value - A minority of the respondents is convinced that EUAV provides added value to existing national volunteering efforts (35%).

Improvement of response capacity - A majority of the respondents agree that EUAV improves the humanitarian response capacity of the Union (60% of the respondents).

Image of the EU in third countries - A clear majority of the respondents agree that EUAV volunteers create a positive image in communities where they serve (73%). One respondent expressed: *"It [EUAV volunteers presence] demonstrates care, commitment and support contributing to the expectations these communities have about Europe and our willingness to help."*

Impact of EUAV

In terms of impact, the majority of the respondents state that they see strong impact on "the personal development of the volunteers" (91%), on "the national volunteers in third countries" (73%) and the "image of the EU" (73%). Less agreement is detectable in the context of the EUAV impact on "disaster preparedness and management" (54%) and on "community disaster risk reduction" (54%), however still a majority of the respondents agree.

Capacity building

The majority of the respondents (54%) is convinced that the capacity building of civil society organisations in third countries organised by EUAV contributes to community resilience. One response stated with respect to resilience building: *"Most civil society organizations in the third world countries work with local communities - grassroots therefore, by strengthening CSOs capacity means you are equally contributing to the resilience of the local communities in those countries (e.g. local communities in Western Uganda which is characterized by flooding)."*

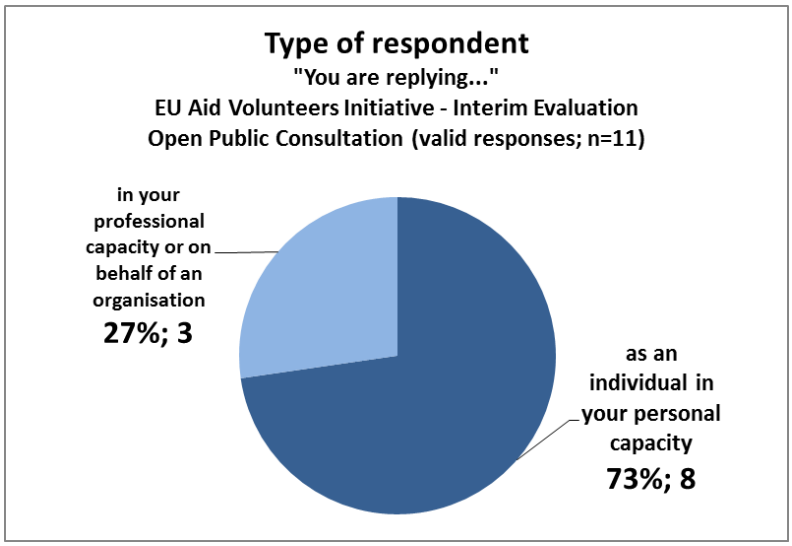
Technical Assistance

The majority of the respondents agree (64%) that "strengthening CSOs in the EU by providing technical assistance" by EUAV contributes to the humanitarian response capacity of the Union. One respondent stated with respect to EUAV technical assistance: *"It's a combination of organisations*

in the EU and the organisations in the countries the EU targets. More important is the deliverable that the EU based organisations contribute to building up a sustainable environment or framework so that the organisations in countries are not continuously depended on knowledge and funding from their European peers."

Respondents to the survey

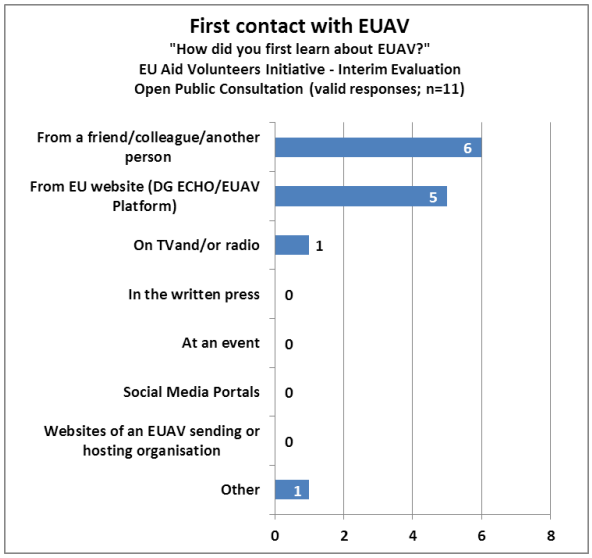
Altogether, 11 responses have been received from 8 individual respondents and 3 responding organisations.



➔ The majority of the respondents are individuals (73% or 8 persons).

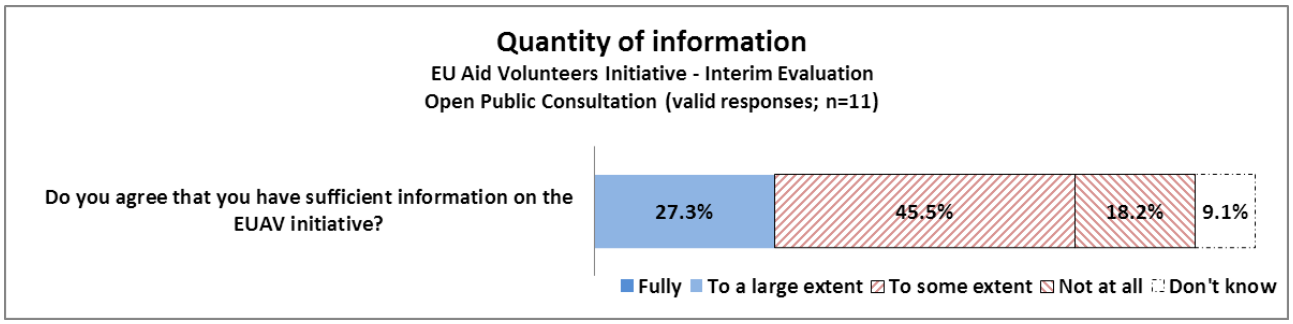
Information about EUAV

Information and sources of information



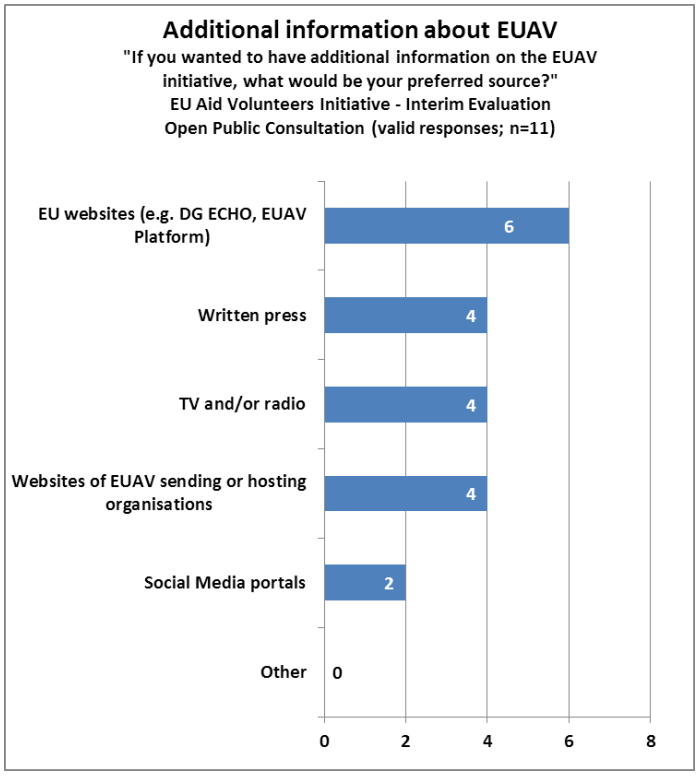
Remark: multiple answers possible

Do you feel that you have sufficient information on the EUAV initiative?



➔ Only a minority feels it has sufficient information on the EUAV initiative (27%)

If you wanted to have additional information on the EUAV initiative, what would be your preferred source?



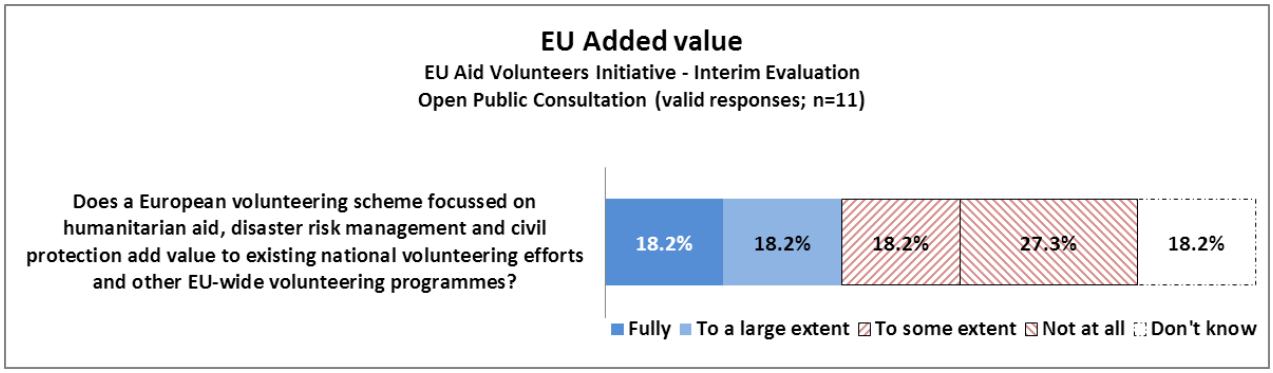
Remark: multiple answers possible

➔ The most preferred channel of information is the internet (EUAV website), followed by the press, TV and radio, and other organisations´ websites.

Views on EUAV

Added value

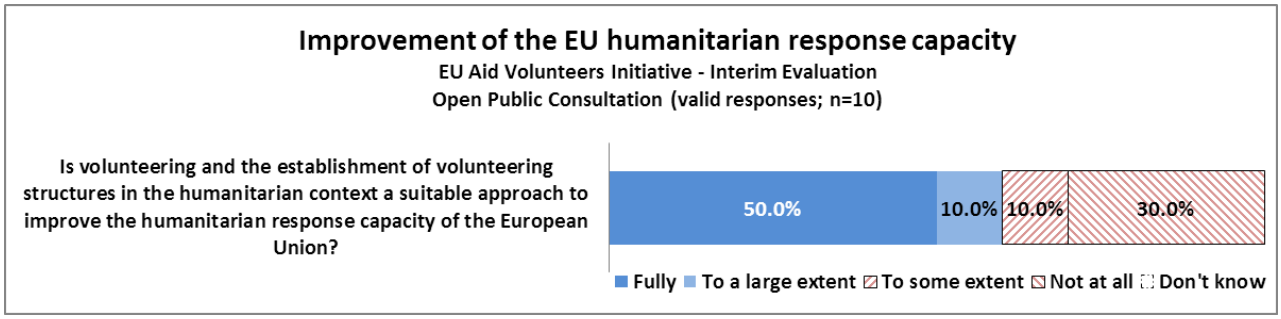
Does a European volunteering scheme focussed on humanitarian aid, disaster risk management and civil protection **add value** to existing national volunteering efforts and other EU-wide volunteering programmes?



➔ A minority of the respondents is convinced that EUAV provides added value to existing national volunteering efforts (35%).

Improvement of response capacity

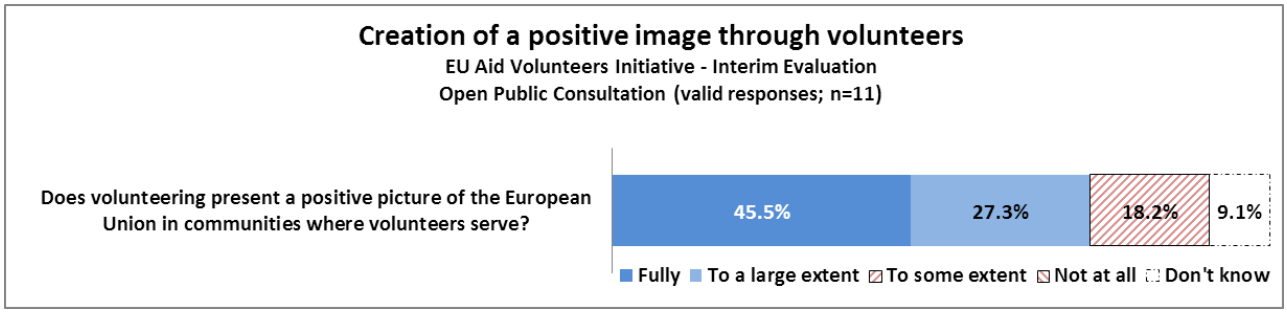
Is volunteering and the establishment of volunteering structures in the humanitarian context a **suitable approach to improve the humanitarian response capacity** of the European Union?



➔ A majority of the respondents agree that EUAV improves the humanitarian response capacity of the Union (60% of the respondents).

Image of the EU in third countries

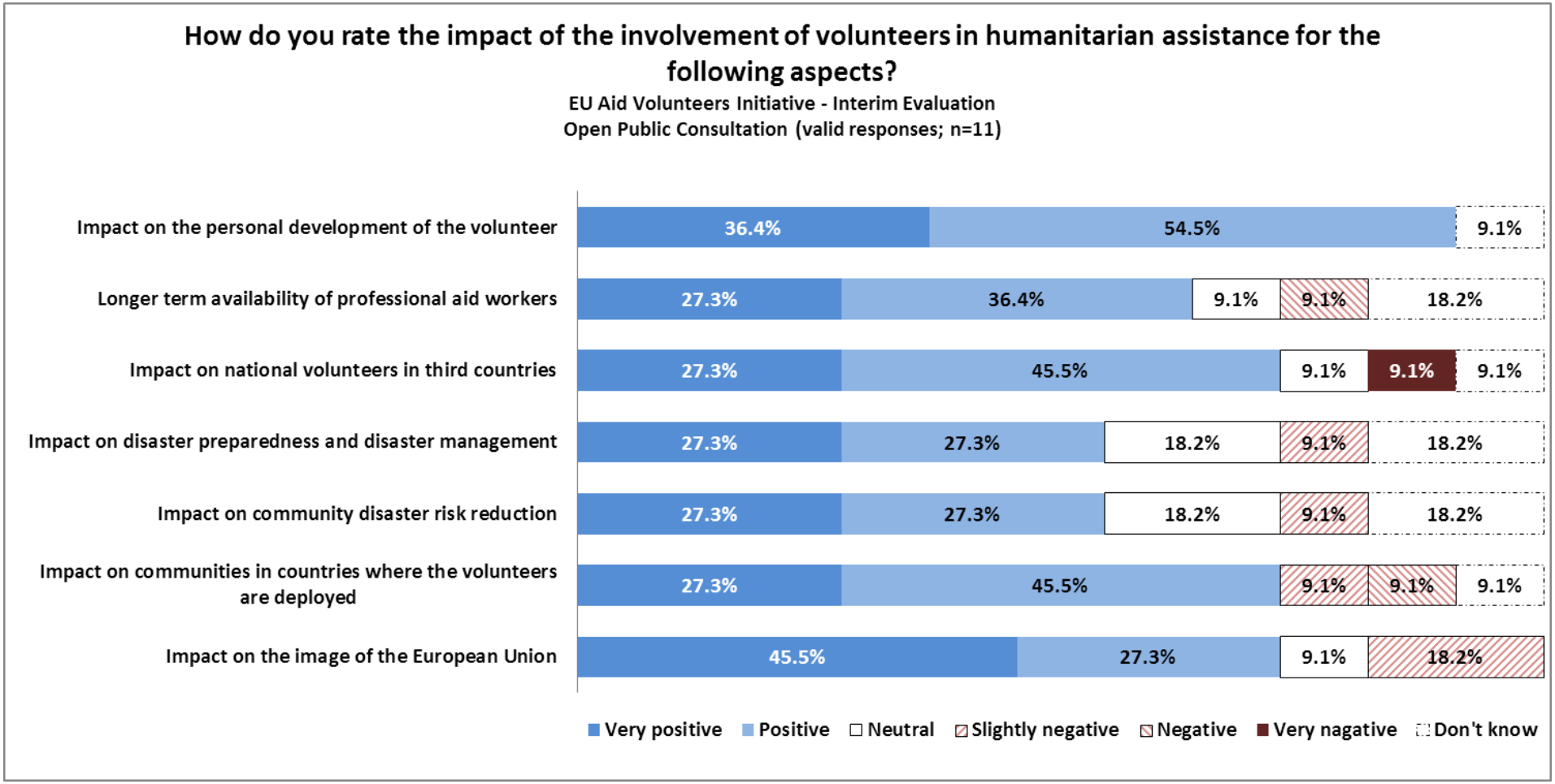
Does volunteering present a positive picture of the European Union in communities where EUAV volunteers serve?



➔ A clear majority of the respondents agree that EUAV volunteers create a positive image in communities where they serve (73%)

One respondent noted: *"It [EUAV volunteers presence] demonstrates care, commitment and support contributing to the expectations these communities have about Europe and our willingness to help."*

Impact of EUAV volunteers

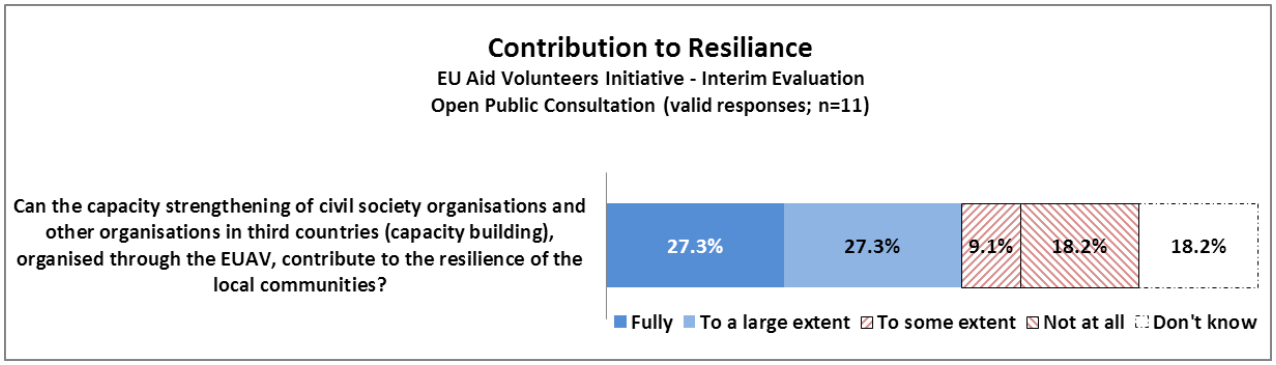


➔ In terms of impact, the majority of the respondents state that they see strong impact on the personal development of the volunteers (91%), the national volunteers in third countries (73%) and the image of the EU (73%). Less agreement is detectable in the context of the EUAV impact on disaster preparedness and management (54%) and on community disaster risk reduction (54%), however still a majority of the respondents agree.

Capacity building and technical assistance

Capacity Building

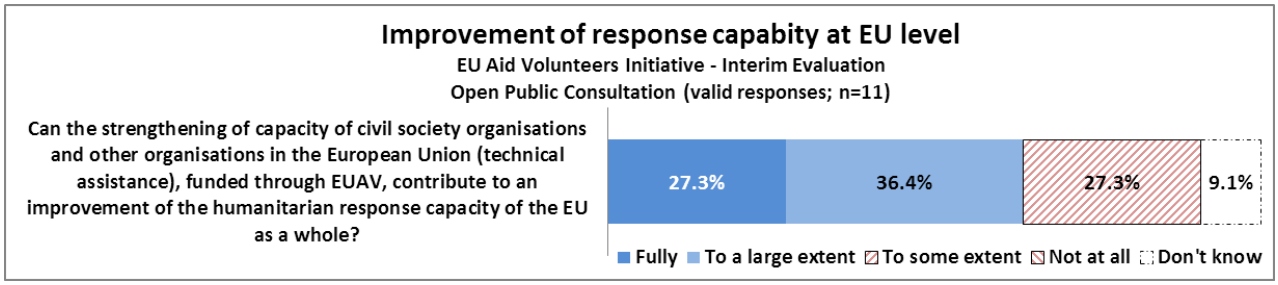
Can the capacity strengthening of **civil society organisations and other organisations in third countries** (capacity building), organised through the EUAV, contribute to the resilience of the local communities?



- ➔ The majority of respondents (54%) is convinced that building the capacity of civil society organisations in third countries organised by EUAV contributes to community resilience.
- ➔ One response stated, with respect to resilience building: *"Most civil society organizations in the third world countries work with local communities - grassroots therefore, by strengthening CSOs capacity means you are equally contributing to the resilience of the local communities in those countries (e.g. local communities in Western Uganda which is characterized by flooding)."*

Technical Assistance

Can the strengthening of **capacity of civil society organisations and other organisations in the European Union** (technical assistance), funded through EUAV, contribute to an improvement of the humanitarian response capacity of the EU as a whole?



- ➔ The majority of the respondents agree (64%) that strengthening CSOs in the EU by providing technical assistance by EUAV contributes to the humanitarian response capacity of the Union.
- ➔ One respondent stated with respect to EUAV technical assistance EU: *"It's a combination of organisations in the EU and the organisations in the countries the EU targets. More important is the deliverable that the EU based organisations contribute to building up a sustainable environment or framework so that the organisations in countries are not continuously depended on knowledge and funding from their European peers."*

Annex 13 - Suggestions for the dissemination plan

This chapter sets out a proposal for the dissemination of the results of the EUAV Interim Evaluation. The products being provided to DG ECHO as a result of this evaluation are:

- An evaluation report with publishable annexes;
- An executive summary (in English, French and German) presenting the main conclusions and recommendations.

These products are recommended to be posted on the DG ECHO website under the section Thematic Evaluation, as a permanent resource with all other thematic evaluations. The link to the evaluation results should likewise be provided on the EUAV platform, and volunteers should be notified that it is there, and that it includes the results of the survey in which they participated. In addition to the publication on the EUAV platform, it is recommended that a facebook message about the process and the availability of the report be posted.

In addition to this general publication, it is recommended that the evaluation results in the Executive Summary (with link to the full report) be proactively forwarded to the following stakeholders:

Commission Services, and related authorities

- DG ECHO management staff based at DG ECHO HQ in Brussels;
- DG ECHO policy and desk officers, and duty officers;
- DG ECHO staff in the field offices (RSO and country offices);
- Executive Agency EACEA management staff in Brussels;
- DG Development Cooperation;
- DG EAC;
- The representatives of the Member States' working groups / committees such as COHAFA, HAC and ProCIV.

We recommend that DG ECHO use this opportunity for the Unit in charge of the field offices to circulate the summary with its own cover note about the opportunities EUAV can provide to those Field Offices, and next steps they could take.

DG ECHO implementation partners

- EUAV partners (Sending and hosting organisations);
- DG ECHO international partners (e.g. FPA / FAFA), including UN Agencies and other international organisations (e.g., OCHA, World Bank, OECD, UNISDR, IOM, Red Cross).
- Service providers (e.g. training, insurance)

Furthermore, it is recommended to:

- Present and discuss the key results and recommendations with the civil protection training policy group
- Present and discuss key results and recommendations with EUAV's stakeholders at the next EUAV network event;
- Meet with VOICE after they have read the summary to see in what circumstances they will support promotion to FPA partners;
- Meet with NOHA after they have read the summary to see where collaboration might be fruitful.

Should DG ECHO feel that the summary would provide positive promotion for the EUAV Initiative, then circulation to a wider audience could happen through organisations such as:

- FORUM
- Volunteering Matters
- ALNAP

Annex 14 - Comments about the validity of evaluation results

The statements provided in the evaluation report can be considered valid to a large extent. The varied methods employed by the evaluators (desk research, data and information provision from ECHO and the Executive Agency, field missions, interviews and participation of implementing partners at EUAV funded events such as the centralised training) provided, in the majority of cases, clear and consistent findings.

In particular, the following facts confirm the validity:

- A significant proportion of all deployed volunteers were interviewed during field missions and training exercises (about 50% of all deployed volunteers at the time of evaluation);
- During field missions all facets of the third country actions of EUAV were observed and reviewed by the evaluation team (e.g. type of involvement of volunteers, volunteer management provisions at host level, CB activities carried out by volunteers or consortium partners, etc.);
- In-depth interviews with the most active EUAV European partners (in terms of funding and of leading EUAV funded deployment / TA and CB consortia);
- A relatively high response rate to targeted surveys (i.e. hosting organisations > 30%; sending organisations > 50%; volunteers >60%, and member states representatives responses representing 27 members – 8 HAC / 13 COHAFA / and 6 ProCIV);
- Overall more than 120 individual stakeholder interviews at the level of EC services, implementing stakeholders, potential implementing stakeholders (e.g. FPA partners not yet engaged), sector network organisations, and others;
- Transparent dialogue with and strong support provided to the evaluation team by the DG ECHO team for the EUAV implementation and the EACEA staff in charge of EUAV.

In cases where there is limited evidence, or where triangulation of findings did not lead to a consistent overall finding, this is indicated in the report. These instances of limited evidence were caused by the following factors:

- All EUAV funded projects were still ongoing during the evaluation period (no single EUAV funded project was finished) and no final report or project evaluation was available to the evaluators. The statements on effectiveness can therefore not draw any final conclusions on output / outcome of EUAV funded projects but only provide findings based on documentary evidence from funded project proposals and observations, and from interviews during field missions and at EUAV partner headquarter level.
- The targeted survey for FPA partners did not attract a satisfying response rate: about 8%, or 13 out of 168 invited. This limits the validity of the reasons why this group is not yet engaged (however, direct interviews confirmed the findings of the surveys).

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