EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 28.6.2018
SWD(2018) 353 final

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Interim Evaluation of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative

Accompanying the document

Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council

on the Interim Evaluation of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative for the period mid-2014 to mid-2017

{COM(2018) 496 final}

Contents

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Term or acronym	*Meaning or definition*
CB	Capacity Building
DG DEVCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
DG DIGIT	Directorate-General for Informatics
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
EU13	Countries which became EU members in 2004 or later
EUAV	EU Aid Volunteers or EUAV initiative
EVS	European Voluntary Service
FPA	Framework Partnership Agreement
ISG	Interservice Group
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OPC	Open public consultation
TA	Technical Assistance

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

This staff working document presents the results of the interim evaluation ('the evaluation') of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative ('the initiative'). The evaluation covers the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 375/2014[1] ('the Regulation') as well as the subsequently adopted Commission Delegated Regulation[2] (EU) No 1398/2014 and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1244/2014.[3] In Article 27(4)(b), the Regulation states that the European Commission ('the Commission') must submit to the European Parliament and the Council '*an interim evaluation report on the results obtained and the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the implementation of this Regulation, including on the impact of EU Aid Volunteers initiative in the humanitarian sector and the cost-effectiveness of the programme, during the first three years of its implementation no later than 31 December 2017'.*

The Regulation also requires the Commission to submit a Communication on the Regulation's continued implementation by 31 December 2018, based on the interim evaluation report mentioned above. Furthermore, by 1 September 2019 the Commission must review the measures set out in the Regulation. Where appropriate following the conclusion of the interim evaluation report, this review must be accompanied by a legislative proposal for amending the Regulation.

The evaluation's findings form part of ongoing reflections on the future of the EU's programmes under the next multiannual financial framework.

The evaluation aims to assess:

- the initiative's results so far;
- the qualitative and quantitative aspects of implementation;
- the initiative's impact on the humanitarian sector;
- cost-effectiveness.

The Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) tasked an external consultant with carrying out an independent study supporting this evaluation. This study covered the first three years of the initiative's implementation, from mid-2014 to mid-2017. The evaluation roadmap was published[4] on 2 May 2017 and included an opportunity to give feedback between 22 May and 19 June 2017. The contract was signed on 3 May 2017 and the final report submitted on 27 November 2017. The outcome of the call for capacity building / technical assistance

[1] Regulation (EU) No 375/2014 of the European Parliament and the Council of 3 April 2014 establishes the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps ('EU Aid Volunteers initiative').
[2] Commission Delegated Regulation[2] (EU) No 1398/2014 of 24 October 2014 sets out standards regarding potential volunteers.
[3] Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1244/2014[3] of 20 November 2014 sets out rules for the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 375/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps ('EU Aid Volunteers initiative').
[4] https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2017-2585948_en.

launched in spring 2017 is also presented in this staff working document. The results of this call were only available in November 2017 after the evaluation period had ended and were therefore not assessed by the external evaluator.

1.2 Scope of the evaluation

Based on the requirements of the Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines, the evaluation used the criteria of **(i) relevance, (i) effectiveness, (iii) efficiency, (iv) coherence and (v) EU added value**.

The evaluation essentially covers the following actions set out in the Regulation:

- Certification

As the initiative's main actions, the Commission has developed standards to ensure the effective, efficient and consistent recruitment and preparation of candidate volunteers and the deployment and management of EU aid volunteers. The standards ensure the duty of care is met and cover the responsibilities of the sending and hosting organisations with regard to the safety and wellbeing of volunteers, minimum requirements for covering subsistence costs, accommodation and other expenses, insurance and other relevant issues.

Sending and hosting organisations need to be certified as compliant with the standards and procedures related to candidate volunteers before they can receive funding for the deployment of EU aid volunteers. A call for applications for certification is open until 2020.

- Capacity building of hosting organisations

After the Commission adopts the initiative's annual work programme, the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), with the Commission's approval, publishes calls for proposals for capacity-building projects. This funding supports actions aimed at strengthening the hosting organisations' capacity to deliver humanitarian aid in order to improve local preparedness and response to humanitarian crises and natural disasters and to ensure effective and sustainable impact of the EU aid volunteers' work on the ground. This action of the initiative shall enable organisations to deploy EU Aid Volunteers in line with the quality standards set out in the Regulation.

- Technical assistance for sending organisations

After the Commission adopts the initiative's annual work programme, the Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency, with the Commission's approval, publishes calls for proposals for technical assistance. Based on a prior assessment of needs, sending organisations based in the EU and wanting to be certified may benefit from technical assistance aimed at strengthening their capacity to participate in the initiative and ensuring compliance with the standards and procedures.

- Deployment of EU aid volunteers in third countries and apprenticeships

Based on the initiative's annual work programme, the Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency, with the Commission's approval, publishes calls for proposals for the deployment of EU aid volunteers by consortia of certified sending and hosting organisations. Sending organisations that are awarded contracts in response to these calls select volunteers jointly with the hosting organisations through the publication of vacancy announcements on the EU Aid Volunteers Platform. EU aid volunteers can either start their deployment directly after their training or be required to do an apprenticeship for a maximum of six months in the office of the sending organisation in Europe and be deployed afterwards. The financial envelope allocated to the initiative from 2014-2020 would allow for the deployment of 4 000 EU Aid Volunteers until 2020.

- Training programme for candidate volunteers

The selected candidates participate in a training programme. The training includes an assessment of candidates' readiness for deployment in third countries.

- Database of EU aid volunteers

After the training, candidate volunteers are assessed for their preparedness to be deployed in third countries. If successful, they are included in a database of EU aid volunteers eligible for deployment (on the EU Aid Volunteers Platform).

- EU Aid Volunteers' Network

A network of candidate volunteers, sending and hosting organisations, Member States and European Parliament representatives was set up in order to facilitate interaction and promote the exchange of knowledge and sharing of experiences.

- Communication and awareness raising

The Commission has developed the EU Aid Volunteers' External Communication Plan specifying communication objectives such as: promoting the initiative and solidarity in general; developing a volunteering identity among participants; and generating interest in and support for the initiative by the general public. Communication activities include the development of visual materials explaining the purpose of the initiative, the set-up of a photo library, and the gathering of stories from the field.

- Online volunteering

Online volunteering opportunities can be included in projects related to the initiative. The first six online assignments were only recently published on the EU Aid Volunteers Platform (October 2017). It is therefore too early to assess the impact of online volunteering on ongoing projects.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE INITIATIVE

2.1 Description of the initiative and its objectives

Article 214(5) of the Treaty of Lisbon provides for the setting up of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps:

'In order to establish a framework for joint contributions from young Europeans to the humanitarian aid operations of the Union, a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps shall be set up. The European Parliament and the Council, acting by means of regulations in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, shall determine the rules and procedures for the operation of the Corps.'

A pilot action to guide the development of the legislative acts setting up the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps was carried out from 2011 to 2014, in three phases. Twelve pilot projects were funded under the pilot action and through these 289 volunteers were deployed to 148 hosting organisations in various third countries.

On 3 April 2014, Regulation (EU) No 375/2014 of the European Parliament and the Council establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps was adopted. It was followed by:

- a Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1398/2014 adopted on 24 October 2014, and
- a Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1244/2014 adopted on 20 November 2014.

The initiative's overall objective is set out in Article 4 of the Regulation: *'The objective of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative shall be 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. That objective shall be attained through the added value of joint contributions of EU aid volunteers, expressing the Union's values and solidarity with people in need and visibly promoting a sense of European citizenship'.*

This general objective is broken down into five operational objectives which are listed in Article 7 of the Regulation:

- to contribute to increasing and improving the EU's capacity to provide humanitarian aid;
- to improve the skills, knowledge and competences of volunteers in the field of humanitarian aid and the terms and conditions of their engagement;
- to build the capacity of hosting organisations and foster volunteering in third countries;
- to communicate the EU's humanitarian aid principles agreed in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid;
- to improve coherence and consistency of volunteering across Member States in order to improve opportunities for EU citizens to participate in humanitarian aid activities and operations.

The impact assessment[5] carried out as part of the initiative's preparation identified the following problems to be addressed:

- lack of a structured EU approach to volunteering;
- poor awareness of EU humanitarian action and solidarity among people in need;
- lack of consistent identification and selection mechanisms for volunteers across EU Member States;
- lack of availability of sufficiently qualified volunteers for humanitarian aid;
- shortcomings in capacity to respond to increased numbers and magnitude of humanitarian crises;
- hosting organisations' lack of capacity due to poor institutional support available.

The intervention logic of the initiative is explained in **Annex 4**. It links the activities carried out under the initiative to specific results, operational objectives and to the overall objective as set out in Article 4 of the Regulation.

The Commission has delegated the project management of the initiative to the Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency through a Commission Decision[6]. The Agency is tasked with the preparation and launch of the calls for proposals and calls for tender, as well as the contract management and implementation of the corresponding budget appropriations in line with the annual work programmes adopted by the Commission. The Commission is responsible for the overall coordination of the initiative, providing the Agency with guidance and advice on implementing the initiative and interpreting the legal base, communicating on the initiative, management of the partner and volunteer network, and overseeing the EU Aid Volunteers Platform.

2.2 Baseline and points of comparison

Before the initiative was launched, the main programmes in the field of internationally deployed volunteers were offered by the United Nations, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and several individual EU Member States.

The main EU volunteering programme in existence when the initiative was launched in 2014 was the **European Voluntary Service (EVS)**. The EVS was created in 1996 and offers funding opportunities for NGOs and other organisations for placements of young volunteers (18-30 years old) in a variety of areas. The main goal of the EVS is to foster solidarity among young people, and to provide learning experiences for volunteers. The projects focus on themes such as culture, youth, sports, social care, cultural heritage, arts, civil protection, environment, and development cooperation. Only a small proportion of EVS volunteers are deployed in the framework of external aid initiatives, mainly as part of development cooperation projects. Humanitarian aid interventions in post-crisis situations are out of scope.

[5] SWD(2012) 265 final of 19.9.2012.
[6] Commission Decision C (2013) 9189 delegating powers to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.

In May 2017, the European Commission proposed to the European Parliament and to the Council a legal framework for a **European Solidarity Corps.**[7] This aimed to create opportunities for young people between the age of 18 and 30 to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad to benefit communities and people mainly in Europe.

The EU Aid Volunteers initiative creates additional volunteering opportunities in the humanitarian field for people of all ages. Centralised EU management of an external volunteering programme opens up opportunities to all EU citizens. Providing common training for volunteers to be deployed to third countries is especially beneficial to those sending organisations which do not have such training in place and for which this would be too costly. Finally, implementing an EU-level initiative like this one would improve the EU's visibility in this area.

The initiative was created in 2014 with a total budget of EUR 147 936 000 for the period 2014-2020. The total appropriations per year (including the administrative costs of around EUR 7000000 for the Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency) and the expected numbers of deployed volunteers at the start of the initiative are as follows:

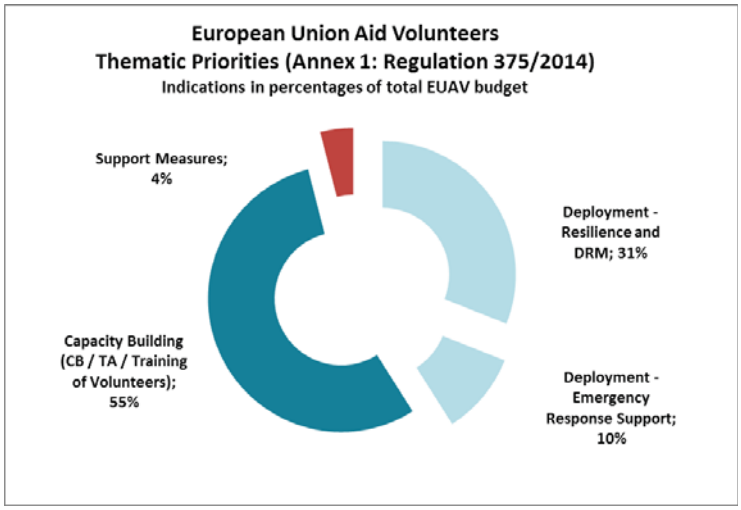
Table 1: Planned budget allocation per year (under the multiannual financial framework) and number of volunteers expected

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Budget in mln EUR	12.7	14.8	17.9	22.0	26.3	26.8	27.5	147.9
Number of volunteers	n/a	≥350	≥350	≥550	≥800	≥1 000m	≥1 250	≥4 300

Regulation No 375/2014 sets out high-level thematic priorities in Annex 1. These influence the proportional allocation of the budget set aside for implementing the Regulation. **It is important to note that the majority of funds (about 55 %) are dedicated to capacity building of third-country organisations, training of EU aid volunteers, and technical assistance for EU-based organisations**. The rest is allocated as follows: 31 % for the deployment of volunteers, 10 % for deployment for emergency support, and 4 % for programme support measures.

Figure 1: EUAV thematic priorities and budget share[8]

[7] https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en.
[8] External evaluation report p. 17.



3. IMPLEMENTATION / STATE OF PLAY

3.1 Action implementation

Activities under the initiative started in December 2014, after the adoption of the Commission Implementing Regulation on 20 November. As the first step, a call for tender for an insurance contract for EU aid volunteers was published in late 2014. A call for certification and the first call for capacity building and technical assistance were published in January 2015. The first six capacity-building projects and four technical assistance projects were contracted at the end of 2015 for a duration of 24 months. Therefore, no final project reports were available over the external evaluation period and only one report was available when this staff working document was being drafted. Interim reports are not required for these projects.

The first call for deployment of volunteers was published on 30 July 2015. Selection results were published on 3 March 2016. The first projects started on 1 June 2016 and 1 July 2016 and run until 31 May 2018. Therefore, as for the calls mentioned above, final reports were not available as input into this evaluation.

The initiative's first years were mainly dedicated to putting in place the provisions set out in the Regulation, the Delegated Regulation and the Implementing Regulation. Service contracts for insuring volunteers and for setting up and running the training programme were concluded. Guidelines were agreed to explain the legal obligations to applicants and beneficiaries. The EU Aid Volunteers Platform was set up in compliance with the legal obligations to provide beneficiaries with a tool for the management and monitoring of volunteers.

The response to the first deployment call was unexpectedly low, with only two proposals that led to the deployment of 44 EU aid volunteers starting from December 2016. Given that the initiative had been prepared over many years with a three-year pilot phase and strong involvement from stakeholders throughout the whole period, this result was less than expected. The Commission has therefore continuously sought feedback from

interested stakeholders in order to learn about their needs and how the initiative could help address them. As a result of this feedback process:

- the budget per project was doubled from the initial EUR 700 000 to EUR 1 400 000;
- the number of mandatory partners per project was reduced from six to four (two EU partners plus two non-EU partners);
- the threshold for capacity-building activities within deployment projects (20 %) was abolished;
- the costs of managing online volunteering assignments were made eligible for reimbursement.

The following table provides an overview of capacity-building, technical assistance and deployment projects selected for funding over the 2015-2017 period.

Table 2: EUAV co-funded projects by type and year (calls for proposals 2015–2017)

Type	Application year	Total co-funding by year (in €)	Number of projects
Capacity building	2015	3 303 072	6
	2016	1 259 294	2
	2017	7 877 044	14
Capacity building (2015 – 2017)		**12 439 410**	**22**
Deployment	2015	1 365 045	2
	2016	4 789 980	4
	2017	5 726 880	6
Deployment (2015-2017)		**11 881 905**	**12**
Technical assistance	2015	1 524 642	4
	2016	1 543 730	3
	2017	2 032 301	4
Technical assistance (2015-2017)		**5 100 673**	**11**
Total		**29 421 988**	**45**

Source: EACEA data tables, December 2017

The annual work programmes for the initiative adopted by the Commission set implementation targets and allocate funds to achieve these annual targets. They are based on the overall targets that were set in the Multiannual Financial Framework before the initiative was launched. The following table shows the allocated amounts in the annual work programmes for 2015–2017 and the actual commitments in the same period.

In both 2015 and 2016, the committed amounts remained below 50 % of the allocated budget for the respective actions. Due to a surge in applications for capacity-building and technical assistance projects and more project applications for deployment, the committed amount reached 80 % in 2017.

Table 3: EU Aid Volunteers budget allocated against budget committed (2015 – 2017)

Heading	2015			2016		
	Allocated €	Committed €	% comm.	Allocated €	Committed €	% comm.
Deployment	8 400 000	1 365 045	16.3 %	8 400 000	4 789 981	57.0 %
Technical assistance / Capacity building	6 948 000	4 827 716	69.5 %	7 960 000	2 803 026	35.2 %
	15 348 000	6 192 761	**40.3 %**	16 360 000	7 593 006	**46.4 %**

Heading	2017		
	Allocated €	Committed €	% comm.
Deployment	12 600 000	5 726 880	45.5 %
Technical assistance / Capacity building	7 607 000	9 909 346	130.3 %[9]
	20 207 000	15 636 226	**77.4 %**

Source: EACEA data tables, December 2017 (figures do not include organisations' self-contributions)

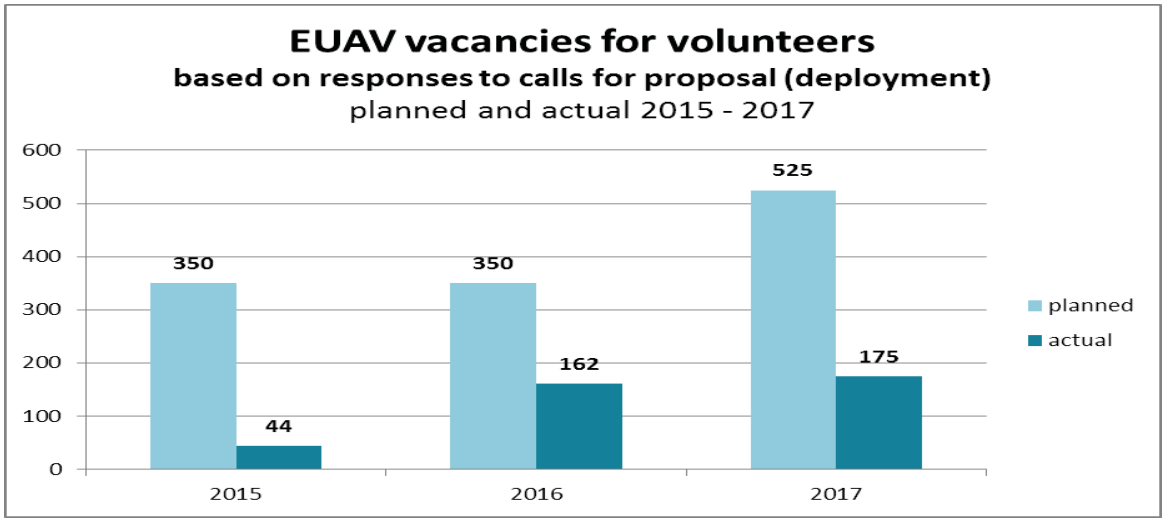
Deployment of EU aid volunteers

Based on responses to the calls for proposals, two deployment projects were selected for funding in 2015 (for the deployment of 44 volunteers), four projects were selected in 2016 (162 volunteers) and six projects were selected in 2017 (175 volunteers). The number of projects was not sufficient to reach the deployment targets set by the Multiannual Financial Framework, as shown below.

The first deployments of the 44 volunteers trained in 2015 started in December 2016 and continued in the first half of 2017. The deployment of the 162 volunteers trained in 2016 started in February 2017 and continues until end of 2018.

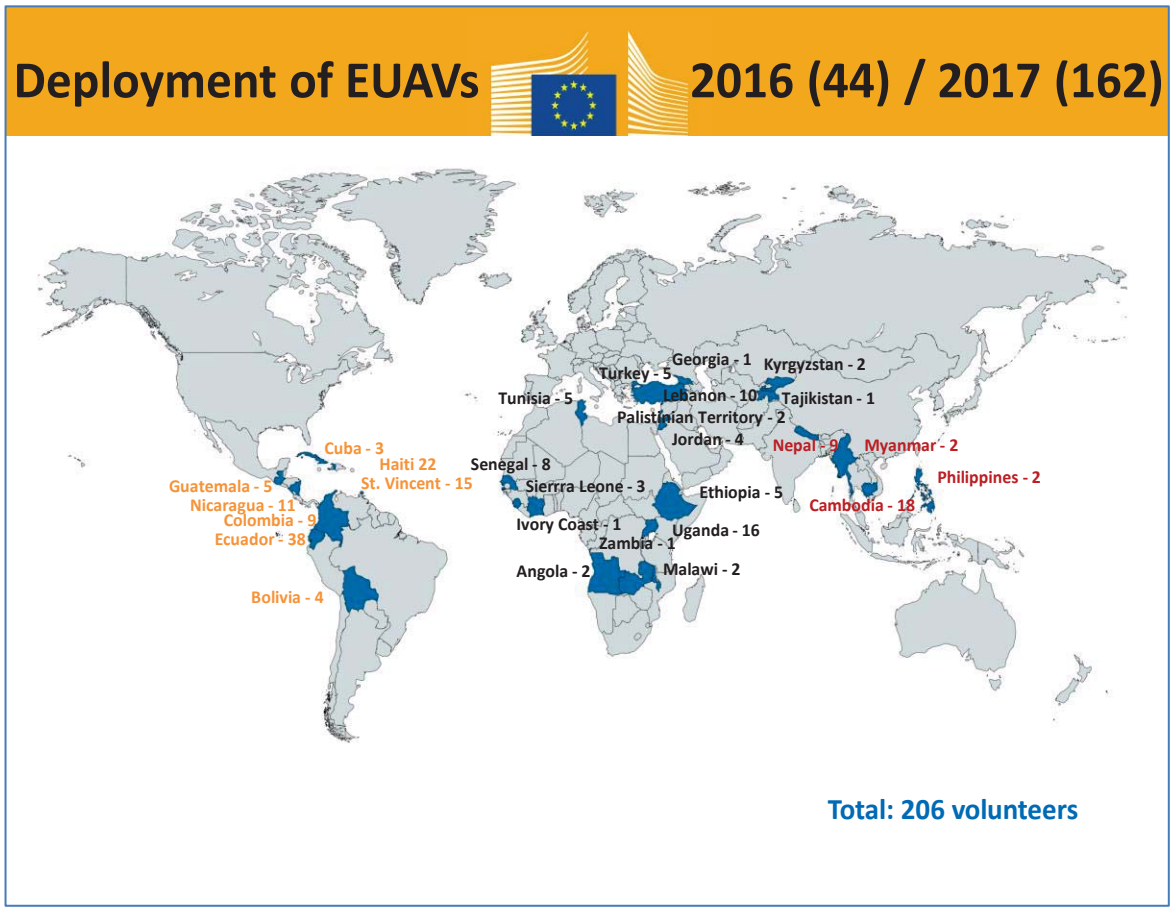
[9] The Commission has some flexibility to re-allocate funding to specific actions up to a maximum of 20 % of the total annual operational budget for the EUAV initiative (Article 3 of Commission Implementing Decision C(2016) 8989 final of 6 January 2017).

Figure 2: EU aid volunteer vacancies 2015 – 2017



Source: Annual work programme and information provided by EACEA (September 2017)

Figure 3: Map with planned deployments of EU aid volunteers 2016 – 2017



The volunteer skills areas requested most often were in the fields of disaster risk management, communication, finance and accounting, project management and climate

change adaptation. An overview of profiles ranked according to their occurrence in published vacancies is provided below.

Table 4: Volunteer skills profiles requested most by sending and hosting organisations

	Volunteer skills areas requested most often (2016/2017 deployments)	%
1	Disaster risk management	26%
2	Communication	13%
3	Finance and accounting	11%
4	Project management	8%
5	Climate change adaptation	8%
6	Gender equality	6%
7	Community-based development / livelihoods	6%
8	Resilience building	4%
9	Education	3%
10	Food security / nutrition	2%
11	Monitoring & evaluation	2%
12	Logistics	2%
13	Agriculture & rural development	2%
14	Protection	2%
15	Water, sanitation, hygiene	2%
16	Human resources	2%
17	Post-disaster / conflict management	1%
18	Social protection	1%
19	Research and development	1%
20	Integrated natural resource management	1%

Source: EU Aid Volunteers Platform

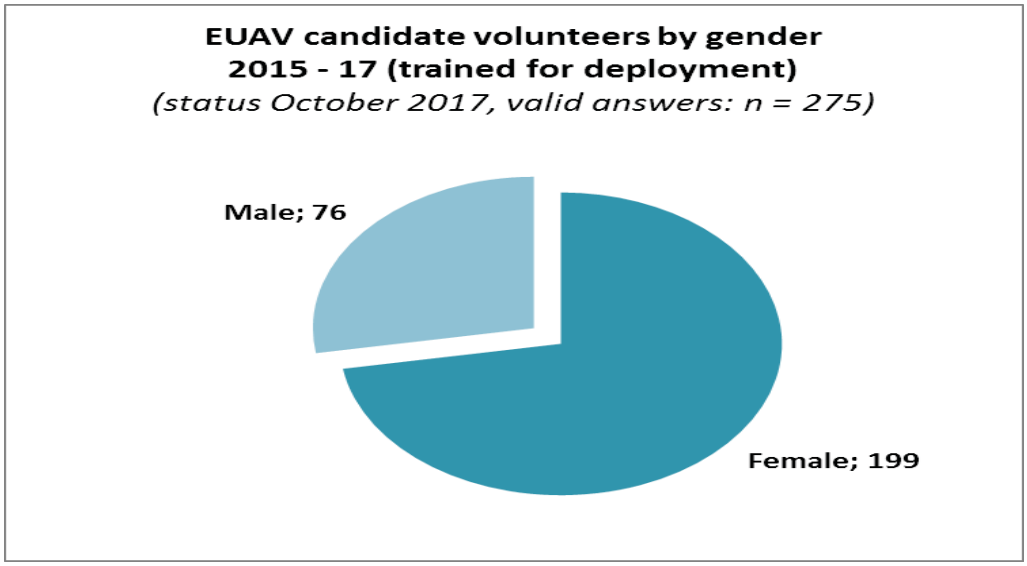
Training

The training curriculum and duration of training for potential volunteers are regulated by the Implementing Regulation. The curriculum with mandatory and optional modules was drawn up through a service contract with an external consortium of education and training partners.[10] Altogether, 15 group training sessions for potential volunteers were organised in 2016 and 2017. The potential volunteers sent on the training were selected jointly by their sending and hosting organisation. **275 selected potential volunteers** were assessed as ready for deployment in the 2015–2017 period. The success rate of the training was 99.3 % and its overall satisfaction rating from potential volunteers was 9 out of 10 points.[11]

The groups of volunteers trained show the following characteristics:

[10] (ICF (leader), MDF Training & Consultancy, Punto Sud, Scuola Sant'Anna, Austrian Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies and GOPA).
[11] Data provided by the training consortium.

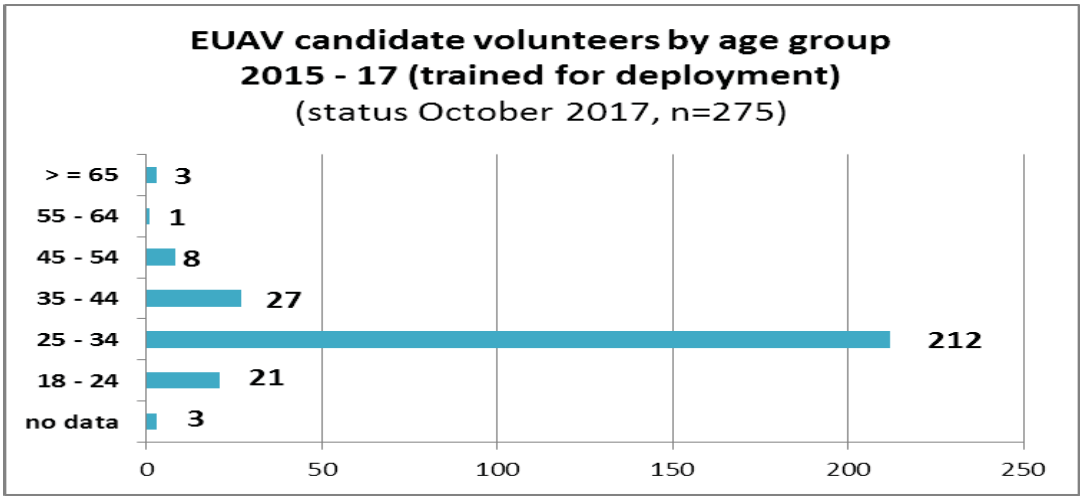
Figure 5: Candidate volunteers by gender (2015–2017)[12]



Source: Information provided by the EACEA

A clear majority of the candidate volunteers (selected) were female (72 %).

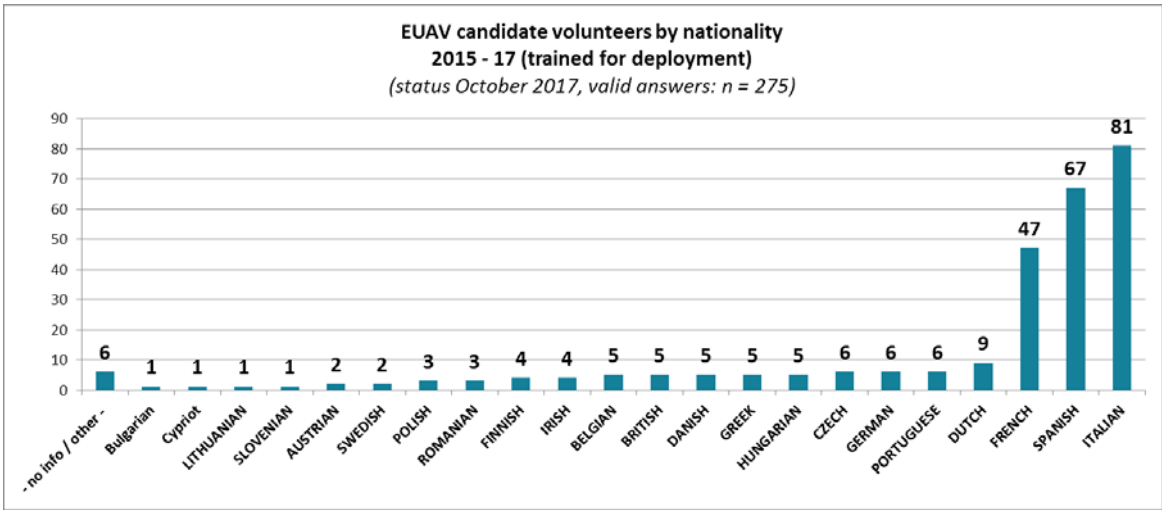
Figure 6: Candidate volunteers by age group (2015–2017)[13]



Source: Information provided by the EACEA

Most of the EU aid volunteers trained in 2016 and 2017 were between 25 and 34 years old. 14 % were older than 34 and 9 % were younger than 25.

[12] External evaluation report p. 19.
[13] External evaluation report p. 19.



Source: Information provided by the EACEA

Figure 7: Candidate volunteers by nationality (2015–2017)

Most of the candidate volunteers were citizens of Italy, Spain or France (71 %) and a low percentage came from the EU13 countries (20 volunteers or less than 7 %).

Capacity building

A total of 22 capacity-building projects have so far been selected for co-funding: six in 2015, two in 2016 and 14 in 2017. The projects involved 82 EU partners[14] and provided capacity-building measures to 160 third-country organisations (partners or associates in these projects). They focused on improving volunteer management, increasing resilience, preparing hosting organisations to participate in the initiative, strengthening the organisational capacity of hosting organisations, gender-sensitive humanitarian volunteering, approaches to community-based protection to build resilience and linking relief, rehabilitation and development and on the development of capacity to improve people's livelihoods. A detailed overview is provided in **Annex 3**.

Technical assistance

Altogether, 11 technical assistance projects were selected for co-funding during the 2015–2017 period. Most of them aim to prepare project partners to successfully undergo the certification process for sending organisations. A list of projects is provided in **Annex 3**.

Certification

The following table shows the number of successfully certified organisations in the 2015-2017 period.[15]

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

[15] Lists of all certified organisations can be found at: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eu-aid-volunteers/selection-results/selection-results-certification-mechanism-for-sending-and-hosting-organisations_en.

Table 5: Number of certified sending and hosting organisations (2015–2017)

	2015	2016	2017	2015-2017
Sending organisations	13	10	13	**36**
Hosting organisations	7	52	50	**109**
Total	**20**	**62**	**63**	**145**

Organisations need to be certified to apply for deployment funding and to deploy EU aid volunteers. Of the 36 certified EU-based sending organisations, around 58 % actively deploy EU aid volunteers, while 42 % have not yet applied for funding for deployment and hence have not yet deployed volunteers. A list of organisations is provided in **Annex 3**.

EU Aid Volunteers Platform and database of EU aid volunteers

The development of a database of EU aid volunteers (part of the EU Aid Volunteers Platform) started at the end of 2015 with a Memorandum of Understanding between DG ECHO and the Directorate-General for Informatics (DG DIGIT). The most important functionalities were developed first: publication of EU aid volunteer vacancies, description of projects, registration of EU aid volunteers, creation of volunteer profiles. The project continued until mid-2017 and a number of other functionalities were added: learning and development plans for volunteers, a mentoring space, a forum for exchange and networking, publication of online volunteering opportunities, publication of stories from the field, etc.

In this way, an EU Humanitarian Aid Corps of qualified and trained junior and senior humanitarian aid professionals is being created. It includes all successfully trained and selected EU aid volunteers, deployed volunteers and former volunteers. The reserve list should grow in coming years; the database currently lists 275 successfully trained volunteers and this is expected to double in 2018. Sending organisations can use the reserve pool if there are dropouts and for short-term requests to support emergency response operations.

EU Aid Volunteers' Network

The EU Aid Volunteers' Network consists of sending and hosting organisations, current and former EU aid volunteers, Member States and Members of European Parliament.

Networking activities happen face-to-face and through virtual exchanges. A 'Back-to-Base' conference was organised in 2015 with former volunteers from the pilot phase. A first EU Aid Volunteers' Network conference was organised by the Commission in February 2017. The 93 participants active in EU aid volunteer projects exchanged information about their activities and provided the Commission with feedback on the initiative's implementation.

The forum that is part of the EU Aid Volunteers Platform is available for virtual exchanges between participating organisations, volunteers and the general public to share information on aspects related to the initiative.

Communication and awareness raising

Responsibility for communication is shared between the Commission and all project partners that receive funding under the initiative. In the 2015-2017 period, project partners published information about their activities via social media, created project websites and produced materials such as 'The EU Aid Volunteer Guidelines for Local Organisations',[16] which was developed as part of a capacity-building project and provides practical guidance for the certification of local organisations under the initiative. A technical assistance project ran webinars for organisations interested in participating in the initiative.[17] The Commission communicates about EU aid volunteers via the DG ECHO website[18]. The EACEA[19] provides targeted information to organisations interested in responding to the calls for proposals. The EU Aid Volunteers' Platform[20] is where general information about project activities and volunteers' stories from the field are published. It also provides a discussion forum for the general public. Furthermore, leaflets, brochures and videos were published on DG ECHO's website.

Several EU Member States supported the Commission's awareness-raising activities about the initiative and helped organise workshops to inform national non-governmental organisations.

3.2 Monitoring

A monitoring framework was agreed between the Commission and EACEA based on the intervention logic of the initiative that links the activities of the initiative with its outcomes and overall ovjectives.[21] EACEA is in charge of the monitoring and provides 6-monthly monitoring reports to DG ECHO.

In addition, Article 27 of the Regulation requires the Commission to submit to the European Parliament and the Council annual reports that examine progress made in implementing the initiative, including outputs and, as far as possible, the main outcomes. The annual reports are published on DG ECHO's website.[22]

4. METHOD

4.1 Short description of methodology

This interim evaluation builds on the external evaluation that was carried out between May and November 2017. Overall, the approach and methodology used by the external

[16] http://www.gvc-italia.org/eu_aid_volunteers_guidelines_for_local_organisations.html.
[17] https://volonteurope.eu/euav-training-webinars/.
[18] https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/eu-aid-volunteers_en.
[19] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eu-aid-volunteers_en.
[20] https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/echo/eu-aid-volunteers_en/.
[21] Annex 4.
[22] http://ec.europa.eu/echo/who/accountability/annual-reports_en.

contractor was satisfactory. It included a research phase that consisted of reviewing documents (legislation, studies conducted during the pilot phase of the initiative, the annual work programmes, annual reports, project proposals, and monitoring reports) and conducting six targeted written surveys (questionnaires) that addressed the following stakeholder groups:

(1) Framework Partnership Agreement partners (international non-governmental organisations) that are not engaged in the initiative and have not participated in pilot projects.
(2) Organisations that participated in the pilot phase, but are not yet engaged in the initiative.
(3) EU-based organisations that are certified, have received technical assistance or have provided technical assistance.
(4) Non-EU-based organisations that have received capacity-building assistance or hosted volunteers.
(5) EU aid volunteers (selected, trained, about to be trained, deployed, and returned).
(6) Member State representatives (Council Working Group on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid, Council Working Group on Civil Protection, Humanitarian Aid Committee).

Furthermore, the external contractor conducted more than 120 individual interviews with representatives of 52 organisations, DG ECHO officials, officials from other Directorate-Generals, the Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency, Member State representatives and other stakeholders:

Table 6: Individual interviews by target group

Stakeholder group	Individual interviews	Organisations / institutions
EU Aid Volunteers sending organisations / EU partners / Recipients of technical assistance	41	15
EU Aid Volunteers hosting organisations	26	22
EU aid volunteers (deployed and during training)	20	n/a
European Commission and services (including: DG ECHO and its field offices, DG DEVCO[23], DG EAC[24], EEAS[25], and EACEA)	18	5
Sector service organisations, associations / Universities	8	4
Member State representatives	4	2
Others (e.g. DG ECHO's Framework Partnership Agreement partners and International Organisations, the training consortium)	5	4
Total	**122**	**52**

Source: External evaluation report p. 12

[23] Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
[24] Directorate General for Education and Culture
[25] European External Action Service

The external contractor conducted three field missions (Haiti and Ecuador, Jordan and Lebanon and Cambodia and Myanmar). These regions were selected based on: the number of projects in the country, the possibility of covering several thematic priorities, ensuring wide geographical coverage (Asia, Middle East, and Caribbean and Latin America), the existence of a variety of different sending and hosting organisations implementing the projects, and the presence of volunteers during the visits. A detailed overview of the organisations interviewed is provided in **Annex 2**.

An open public consultation (OPC) was launched at the end of July 2017. It ran until 31 October 2017 and had 30 responses. A detailed analysis of the replies is provided in **Annex 2**.

4.2 Limitations and reliability of findings

The short evaluation period (May to November 2017)[26] did not leave much time for desk research. Almost all co-funded activities (deployment, technical assistance and capacity building under the initiative) were still ongoing, with no interim or final reports available. In addition, the initiative did not operate at full capacity at the start; as explained in section 3.1, several of its activities have only been in place for a short time, which made it difficult to evaluate their effectiveness and efficiency. For example:

- An assessment if the budget would have been sufficient if the initiative would have operated at full capacity from the start (more volunteers deployed, more projects funded).
- If all actions could be carried out as planned and all services provided with sufficient performance if the initiative would have achieved the objectives set in the multiannual financial framework.

Furthermore, the results of the call for proposals on capacity building and technical assistance launched in spring 2017 were only published on 28 November 2017 and could therefore not be taken into account in the external evaluation report. The evaluators relied to a large extent on the opinions or perceptions of interviewed stakeholders.

Overall, the surveys and comments gathered from the interviews provide useful insights into the management of volunteers. The unavailability of final project reports was a limitation, but the opinions and perceptions of non-EU-based organisations gathered as a result of the field missions were of interest. The limited uptake in the initiative's first years meant that there was a reduced number of potential interviewees with an in-depth and diverse experience of the initiative. Therefore, the results of the interim evaluation can only give an indication of its overall impact on local communities, the improvement of capacity of stakeholders participating in the initiative, and volunteers' skills development and their potential impact on the humanitarian sector.

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

5. ANALYSIS OF ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The analysis of answers to the evaluation questions[27] is organised around the five objectives of the initiative as set out in Regulation 375/2014:

- Objective 1: to contribute to increasing and improving the EU's capacity to provide humanitarian aid.
- Objective 2: to improve the skills, knowledge and competences of volunteers in the field of humanitarian aid and the terms and conditions of their engagement.
- Objective 3: to build the capacity of hosting organisations and foster volunteering in third countries.
- Objective 4: to communicate on the EU's humanitarian aid principles agreed in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.
- Objective 5: to improve coherence and consistency of volunteering across Member States in order to improve opportunities for EU citizens to participate in humanitarian aid and activities.

5.1 Relevance

5.1.1 Relevance of the objectives to end beneficiaries, sending- and hosting organisations, and volunteers

The EU Aid Volunteers initiative is relevant for end beneficiaries. It aims to support **end beneficiaries (local communities)** by sending EU citizens to third countries to support and build the capacity of communities to respond to disasters and to deliver humanitarian aid in partnership with EU-based organisations. However, Objective 3 could in principle also be achieved through direct funding to end beneficiaries without the involvement of European volunteers. Nonetheless, well-trained, senior EU aid volunteers with specific knowledge or skills could have a positive impact, as multipliers or trainers, on improving the skills and knowledge of local communities. Local communities also benefit from activities carried out by the hosting organisations directly involved in the initiative (e.g. through training or preparedness exercises) to foster volunteering and support the development of their skills in, for example, disaster prevention and preparedness.

The EU Aid Volunteers initiative is also relevant for **sending and hosting organisations,** because they can directly benefit from funding provided through the initiative. This funding enables them to develop activities that improve their capacity to provide humanitarian aid and this contributes to the EU's overall capacity to provide humanitarian aid. Organisations can deploy junior or senior professionals as EU aid volunteers and build a pool of staff for the future. Objective 3 is also relevant to sending and hosting organisations, because capacity-building and technical assistance funding is increasingly rare in the humanitarian sector[28] while needs are increasing (especially considering the World Humanitarian Summit's localisation agenda). Strengthening local volunteering was mentioned by 90 % of the hosting organisations that responded to the

[27] See list of evaluation questions in Annex 5.
[28] External evaluation report p. 35.

external evaluator's survey[29] as an objective of their work with the initiative. Therefore, capacity-building activities under the initiative fit well with the needs of sending and hosting organisations. The external evaluation study consulted also organisations that do not yet take part in the initiative. They gave the following reasons why the initiative is not relevant for them:

- *'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.'*[30]

The initiative is relevant for European citizens who envisage future employment in the humanitarian sector and welcome the opportunity to improve their knowledge and competences in this field. Nine out of eleven **EU aid volunteers** interviewed for the external evaluation study[31] confirmed that they would like to stay in the humanitarian sector and 98 % of respondents to the survey indicated that they applied as EU aid volunteers to pursue a career in the humanitarian field. The initiative provides them with useful field experience which will improve their employability in the sector. In the long term, it also supports the further professionalisation of the sector and its capacity to provide needs-based humanitarian aid.

5.1.2 Relevance of actions under the initiative in relation to objectives

The various actions were described in Chapter 3.1. All actions are relevant in relation to the initiative's objectives. No need for additional actions has been identified at this initial stage.

[29] External evaluation report p. 29.
[30] External evaluation report p. 58.
[31] External evaluation report p. 28.

Certification and volunteer management standards for the recruitment and deployment of EU aid volunteers are set out in the Regulations. These rules and procedures must ensure the safety and security of volunteers, their wellbeing at the workplace and at home, their fair recruitment, their continuous learning and development during the deployment, and their attachment to the network after deployment. The standards also cover rules for building partnerships and ensuring a strong role of the hosting organisation in the process of selecting and recruiting volunteers. Certification and standards are therefore mainly relevant in relation to Objectives 2 and 5 and are an important part of reaching these objectives.

Capacity building is relevant in relation to Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4, because it enables hosting organisations to participate in the initiative and to get certified. It enables hosting organisations to improve their knowledge about humanitarian aid and humanitarian principles. It supports the improvement of volunteer management skills for both EU aid and local volunteers so that they can make a needs-based contribution to the work of the hosting organisations and develop their skills further. It is an important way of bringing hosting organisations into the initiative.

Almost all sending organisations are positive about the funding provided by the initiative for **technical assistance.**[32] It is relevant in relation to Objective 1, because it has been instrumental in introducing smaller or new organisations to the initiative and hence to the sector of humanitarian aid. It is also relevant in relation to Objectives 4 and 5, because organisations organise training and networking activities that are relevant to certification under the initiative. The external evaluation found that, so far, not many technical assistance projects have resulted in applications for certification. Although it is impossible to know at the start of the project if a participating organisation will ultimately be able to successfully go through certification, this should at least be a clear objective. The wording used in the call for proposals to describe requirements could therefore be strengthened.

The **training** of volunteers is relevant in relation to all five objectives of the initiative, notably with regard to improving skills and competences. In the medium- to long term, EU aid volunteers remaining in the sector contributes to the improvement of EU capacity to provide humanitarian aid. Only trained volunteers are sent out in the field and their training increases the likelihood that they can support the capacity of the local hosting organisation. The training teaches volunteers about humanitarian principles and the Consensus and sets a standard for common training of volunteers from all over Europe.

The deployment of EU aid volunteers is one of the initiative's main actions and is relevant in relation to all its objectives: volunteers have the potential to increase the EU's capacity to provide humanitarian aid (Objective 1) if they can be deployed in larger numbers, remain in the sector and become future humanitarian aid professionals. Deployment should also improve the skills, knowledge and competences of volunteers in the field of humanitarian aid (Objective 2). It also promotes the wide applications of EU aid volunteers' deployment standards and hence the terms and conditions of their

[32] External evaluation report p. 35.

engagement in the field (Objective 5). Senior EU aid volunteers are deployed to help build the capacity of hosting organisations and to foster volunteering in third countries; this is relevant in relation to Objective 3. EU aid volunteers receive training on the EU's humanitarian aid principles and are encouraged to promote these principles during their deployment with their hosting organisations; this is relevant in relation to Objective 4. The external study identified a potential gap: some hosting organisations indicated a need for further financial resources to ensure the realisation of the project in which an EU aid volunteer worked. This can indeed be an issue if the volunteer does not work in a humanitarian or development aid project that is funded by a donor, but rather directly with the local community in support of a local organisation. Whether or not this element could be part of the deployment action could be explored further.

In the medium- to long-term, the **database** of trained and selected EU aid volunteers has the potential to create a *corps* of trained and experienced humanitarian aid professionals who might find employment in the sector and hence contribute to the achievement of Objective 1 (increasing the EU's capacity to provide humanitarian aid).

The **EU Aid Volunteers Network** facilitates knowledge sharing and partnership building. It supports the creation of the *corps*, and also potentially Objective 2 (improving knowledge). Networking is supposed to be facilitated by the EU Aid Volunteers Platform, but this is currently limited, because partners are not yet aware of this tool or use other platforms. The external evaluation[33] found that partners and volunteers are very interested in face-to-face meetings and exchanges to boost networking and mutual learning.

Communication and awareness raising activities attract more potential volunteers and organisations to participate in the initiative. They are therefore relevant in relation to Objective 1. They may also be relevant in relation to Objective 4 if they include communication on the EU's humanitarian aid principles and the Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

As concerns the **process of selecting EU aid volunteers** and matching their profiles and skill sets with the needs of hosting organisations, the initiative requires that volunteers be recruited on the basis of vacancy announcements. These are drafted jointly by the sending and hosting organisation and describe the required profile and skills, as well as the tasks to be carried out. Under the Regulation, the final selection decision to recruit an EU aid volunteer is taken by the hosting organisation. The external evaluation[34] found that, overall, all organisations are satisfied with the provisions that make it possible for them to request specific skillsets and profiles, and then match applicants with this profile.

In general, it can be concluded that the actions listed in the Regulation are all relevant in relation to the objectives of the initiative. However, Objective 4 (communicating on the EU's humanitarian aid principles) is only addressed by a few activities (training of volunteers and capacity building / technical assistance if partners choose to do so). The initiative has only contributed to this broad objective to a limited extent. Furthermore,

[33] External evaluation report p. 36.
[34] External evaluation report p. 39.

although the fit between skills available and profiles needed is satisfactory, volunteers' satisfaction with their deployments could be improved.

5.2 Effectiveness

5.2.1 Degree of achievement of the objectives

The funding instruments provided by the initiative contribute to increasing and improving the EU's capacity to provide humanitarian aid (**Objective 1**) in the broad sense defined in the Regulation. The 11 technical assistance projects helped EU-based organisations improve their knowledge about humanitarian aid, disaster risk management and volunteer management and created networking and partnership-building opportunities. However, this will only translate into a tangible contribution to the provision of aid when these organisations actually engage in the activities covered by the Regulation. The 22 capacity-building projects had the same objectives as the technical assistance projects, and in addition fostered cooperation between EU-based and other organisations across the world. 275 candidate volunteers were trained and more than 200 are currently being deployed in order to build local capacity. However, the initiative is very small, both when we compare its budget to the EU's overall humanitarian aid budget (EUR 1 billion) and in terms of numbers of people involved. Its overall impact on the EU's capacity to provide humanitarian aid is therefore clearly limited. In addition, it should be noted that the initiative is not linked to a major funding programme that would allow the funding of own staff and project implementation activities in addition to funding the volunteer. Organisations therefore need to be confident that project funding will be available from another source.

It is too early to assess whether training and deployment have indeed led to an improvement in the skills, knowledge and competences of volunteers in the field (**Objective 2**), as well as in the terms and conditions of their engagement. However, 92 % of volunteers who participated in the survey[35] indicated that deployment as EU aid volunteers has had a positive impact on their personal development.

As regards building the capacity of hosting organisations and fostering volunteering in third countries (**Objective 3),** there is currently no data that would make it possible to draw conclusions on the impact of ongoing capacity-building projects on hosting organisations or on the extent to which volunteering has been fostered in third countries (Objective 3). This can only be assessed when the projects end, through submitted project reports and targeted surveys.

As regards communicating on the EU's humanitarian aid principles agreed in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (**Objective 4**), candidate EU aid volunteers are systematically trained on the meaning of the principles and the Consensus. Some technical assistance projects also included information about the principles and the Consensus in their training and exchange activities. Although there is some awareness of humanitarian principles and the Consensus among EU aid volunteers, there is no evidence at this stage that information on these topics has reached local communities in

[35] External evaluation report p. 29.

third countries or the wider public within the EU. The external evaluation[36] examined also the extent to which the communication strategy helped generate **increased public awareness** of the initiative and the EU's role in the field of humanitarian aid. It found that the initiative led to a significant online presence created by the various projects, which are required to communicate about the initiative and their work, alongside the communication work done by the Commission / Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency. Interest from the general public and potential volunteers in the initiative has been high with 300 000 website visits per year,[37] an average of around 30 applications per volunteering vacancy and a subscriber list of over 1 000 people to be alerted to vacancies. Communication about the initiative therefore generated increased public awareness about EU aid volunteers. It was not yet, however, possible to measure whether this interest in the initiative has also increased public awareness of the role of the EU in humanitarian aid. This could be assessed in future through a Eurobarometer survey.

As concerns the improvement of coherence and consistency of volunteering across Member States (**Objective 5**), the initiative provided limited additional volunteering opportunities in the humanitarian field for EU citizens. The certification requirement means that organisations that participate in the initiative accept the European volunteering standards. However, so far there is no evidence to show that this has led or will lead to these standards also being applied to volunteers funded by national volunteering schemes. If the initiative grows and involves more EU-based non-governmental organisations, it would be expected that the standards would be applied more broadly.

5.2.2 Other results from the initiative

Looking at to the **extent to which the initiative reached new organisations** that have not worked with the Commission, and promoted new partnerships between organisations, the external evaluation report found that many of the consortia that applied for funding under the initiative are composed of organisations that work already together in a network or are affiliates of EU-based organisations. Bringing in an increased number of organisations, especially new organisations, would contribute to Objective 1. In addition, 82 % of the respondents[38] indicated that they have applied for or received EU funding before. Of the 109 certified hosting organisations, 78 are offices of EU sending organisations (72 %) and 31 are local organisations (28 %). Given that the EU Aid Volunteers initiative is a new initiative, it is understandable that organisations are keen to reduce risk and would rather partner with established and trusted partners on the deployment of volunteers. New partnerships were mostly created between humanitarian organisations and volunteering organisations with no significant previous experience in humanitarian aid.[39]

[36] External evaluation report p. 55.
[37] External evaluation report p. 54.
[38] External evaluation report p. 56.
[39] External evaluation report p. 56.

5.3 Efficiency

Overall, sending organisations have a very positive view of the efficiency of the **recruitment process**, because it allows them to recruit high quality volunteers.[40] Volunteers had a different view, though, with 26 % rating the process as 'poor' or 'very poor'.[41] This might be linked to delayed responses to their applications due to the high number of applications sending organisations had to deal with, or with the long time between application and actual deployment. Organisations were also faced with dropouts both prior to and after training and had to use reserve candidates, which adds to the organisations' workload.

Safety and security provisions are an important issue for all the initiative's objectives, because without these, potential volunteers would probably not participate in the initiative. They are therefore embedded in various activities, including in the certification of organisations, the publication of a list of countries eligible for the deployment of volunteers that excludes countries with ongoing violent conflict; training for potential volunteers and mandatory pre-deployment and in-country induction training. The external evaluation study[42] found through its field missions that safety and security is taken seriously by all stakeholders involved in actual deployment situations.

Stakeholders mentioned that they would like to have more flexibility with regard to the compilation of the list of deployment countries. Currently, countries may be excluded from the list if parts of them experience a current violent conflict. The Commission should take a more regional approach to the safety and security assessment of countries.[43]

The external evaluation study observed that different organisations set different safety and security requirements for volunteers at the same location (for example regarding the possibility of moving freely). The Commission could consider measures to encourage consistency in requirements between the sending and hosting organisations that deploy EU aid volunteers to the same location.

The legal provisions (especially in the Implementing Regulation) are very detailed and prescriptive. The external evaluation study concluded that *'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'.*[44] The study also took account of action taken by the Commission and the Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency to simplify and improve the processes while complying with the provisions of the legislation. The procedures seem complex, especially for organisations that are mainly active in EU humanitarian aid activities, which allow for simplified grant management procedures. New organisations might first need to participate in capacity-building or technical

[40] External evaluation report p. 99.
[41] External evaluation report p. 99.
[42] External evaluation report p. 61.
[43] External evaluation report p. 61.
[44] External Evaluation Report p. 66.

assistance projects in order to build their own capacity and fulfil the requirements for certification. Preparatory technical assistance or capacity-building projects under the initiative generally run for 24 months. Therefore, the move into applying for deployment projects materialises only after this period. The time needed to send selected potential volunteers to face-to-face training also adds several months. In total, the average time from publication of the call to deployment of volunteers is 18 months.

The Commission agrees that there needs to be further simplification of processes and administrative procedures, in order to increase organisational participation in the initiative and to incentivise participation by more organisations. For example, sending organisations find the certification process challenging. Even established volunteering organisations need up to six months to prepare for certification. It can then take a further six months to become certified. According to the survey carried out for the external study[45] 35 % found the process very cumbersome, 50 % found that it was challenging but that they could handle it, and only 14 % found the process straightforward with no major challenge. It is important to note that this refers to the certification process and not to complying with the standards themselves. The survey found that[46] 85 % of respondents from hosting organisations are positive about the process for certification. The reason for this might be that many of the local offices of EU-based sending organisations go through a simplified certification process which is handled for them by their EU-based office and therefore not perceived as burdensome.

These comments were also reiterated in bilateral meetings between the Commission and EU-based organisations. In 2016, the self-assessment forms were thoroughly revised to make them more user-friendly. Further simplification of the certification process, including for FPA partners, is an ongoing issue.

The external evaluation study[47] found that the **monitoring framework** is in line with the initiative's intervention logic and generally complies with the Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines. However, data collection is challenging, because data cannot be collected automatically and requires a high level of manual processing. The current monitoring framework gathers exclusively quantitative data twice a year. Although useful for reporting purposes, qualitative data would help to better assess the real value of the projects in the humanitarian sector, relating to disaster risk management or linking relief, rehabilitation and development. The process for monitoring compliance with certification standards will need to be strengthened in the future, because field visits carried out by the external contractors[48] found that not all sending and hosting organisations apply all the standards they committed to during the certification process.

Given the short implementation period for the initiative to date, a full **cost-effectiveness** analysis has not been possible. Three issues were therefore considered to assess the cost-effectiveness of processes:

[45] External evaluation report p. 90.
[46] External evaluation report p. 90.
[47] External evaluation report p. 69.
[48] External evaluation report p. 33.

1. The outsourcing of the contract management to the Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency was done based on a cost-benefit analysis conducted in 2013,[49] which concluded that implementation by the Agency is more cost-effective than an 'in-house' solution and could lead to savings of up to 25 %. This finding was confirmed by the external evaluation study.[50]
2. The two service contracts put in place for the initiative (training and insurance) were allocated on the basis of competitive tenders and are based on a variable cost structure (i.e. cost per use / volunteer).[51]
3. Organisations are requested to prove cost-effectiveness in their proposals submitted to the Agency, which are evaluated by external evaluators.

In the external evaluation study,[52] the contractor calculated the average costs per volunteering month based on planned deployments in 2015-2016 and the corresponding budgets included in the proposals. Real costs will only be available when the deployment projects end (the first 2 projects end mid-2018) and the real deployment costs can be extracted from the final project reports. A deployed EU aid volunteer costs an average of EUR 4 087. The volunteer costs per month in the pilot phase were estimated at EUR 4 414. By way of comparison, a UNV International Volunteer costs EUR 4 386, while an International Young Volunteer costs EUR 3 296. It seems therefore that the costs for EU aid volunteers are comparable with costs for other international volunteering programmes.

The initiative did not achieve the planned levels of deployments and that demand for capacity building / technical assistance and certification was below the expected levels. As a result, **the allocated budget** in the 2014-2020 MFF was not entirely used in 2014-2017. The amounts allocated for drawing up the training curriculum, purchasing insurance for EU aid volunteers and setting up the EU Aid Volunteers Platform were fully used.

Due to a relatively low number of project proposals, the 100 % increase of the project budget for deployment projects (from EUR 700 000 to EUR 1 400 000) enabled a growth in applications and the deployment of more volunteers compared with the low number in the first year of implementation.

The first phase of the initiative was marked by initial spending (establishment of the training curriculum, insurance scheme and the setup of the EUAV Platform) that will hopefully amortise in future years with higher volunteer numbers.

Due to the fact that the initiative is not yet running at full capacity, it is difficult to draw final conclusions on the budget required to meet the high targets for deployment set in the MFF. As no final project reports or cost statements are available, no conclusions can be drawn about the costs per volunteer month (e.g. difference between the estimates and

[49] External evaluation report p. 73.
[50] External evaluation report p. 70.
[51] External evaluation report p. 76.
[52] External evaluation report p. 72.

actual costs), and the results and achievements in relation to the budget invested in capacity building and technical assistance.

5.4 Coherence

The evaluation examined the initiative's coherence **with related EU activities**, particularly under the humanitarian aid, development and civil protection instruments. EU aid volunteers cannot be deployed to places with armed conflict.[53] Volunteers are mainly deployed in safer environments and carry out work related to disaster risk management and linking relief, rehabilitation and development. It is not envisaged that volunteers will be deployed in Commission-funded projects that target vulnerable communities in difficult security conditions. Coherence with the Commission's core **humanitarian aid** activities will therefore clearly be limited. The Regulation, however, provides for the possibility of deploying EU aid volunteers in support functions in emergency operations (logistics, communication, project management, procurement). These deployments would require specific procedures and calls for proposals, which have not yet been developed or tested.

The wide definition of 'humanitarian aid' in the Regulation allows for the deployment of EU aid volunteers to work on resilience and linking relief, rehabilitation and development. Although EU aid volunteers are deployed in development projects funded by the European Commission[54] and the survey of hosting organisations carried out during the external evaluation[55] found that of 22 respondents 17 are involved in both humanitarian aid and **development assistance**, there has been no systematic approach to linking deployment of EU aid volunteers with European development projects or the Sustainable Development Goals.

Coherence with **civil protection** activities has been limited, to date. The Council Working Group on Civil Protection has been informed about the initiative's progress and has also been consulted by the contractor as part of the external evaluation study. Good examples of collaboration with civil protection bodies that could increase coherence with civil protection policy and be easily replicated are two capacity-building projects led by the Italian Civil Protection department that took place in 2015 and 2017. In the medium term, capacity building and deployment could support the World Humanitarian Summit's localisation agenda,[56] because these actions focus directly on building the capacity of local organisations (or third-country field offices) and local communities.

Regarding **internal coherence** between EU policies, the eligible activities under the initiative are designed to enable EU-based and third-country organisations, through building capacity and providing technical assistance funding to further develop their humanitarian aid skills and knowledge so that they can participate in the initiative and

[53] Regulation 375/2014, consideration 12*: 'EU aid volunteers should not be deployed to operations conducted in the theatre of international and non-international armed conflicts.*
[54] External evaluation report p. 43.
[55] External evaluation report p. 42.
[56] External evaluation report p. 44.

meet the initiative's high standards for volunteer management. The initiative created a certification process to ensure that volunteers are properly managed, safe and secure, and supported to learn and develop during their activities in the field. Central training for potential volunteers provides the necessary preparation for deployment in countries with vulnerable populations and sometimes difficult humanitarian situations. Funding for the deployment of EU aid volunteers enables organisations to cover their costs for volunteers and other costs related to managing the volunteer's work. The database and EU Aid Volunteer Platform provide support for managing deployed volunteers and allow for communication and networking activities that go beyond the deployment period, supporting the creation of a European voluntary humanitarian corps. All these actions complement each other. More time is required to see how many organisations receive certification after taking part in capacity-building or technical assistance programmes and subsequently apply for EU aid volunteers, which has been the aim of this approach. This work has been designed to achieve good internal coherence between the EU Aid Volunteers initiative and other EU policies in this area, but at this stage not enough evidence is available to support a conclusive assessment.

5.5 EU added value

On the extent to which the initiative has provided **an EU added value**, the external evaluation[57] found that stakeholders appreciate having an EU volunteering scheme, because it applies the same procedures for organisations in all EU countries. Stakeholders that participated in the open public consultation (19) have split views on whether the needs addressed through the initiative and the initiative's objectives could instead be achieved through Member States' national volunteering schemes or volunteering schemes run by other actors, e.g. United Nations Volunteers or Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers. While 36.8 %[58] agree fully or to a large extent with this statement, the same number of respondents (36.9 %) agree only to some extent or not at all. It must, however, be noted that this is the result of only 19 contributions and can therefore not be regarded as representative. Stakeholders welcome the availability of funding for capacity building and technical assistance activities and agreed that the initiative increases opportunities for neighbouring countries to work together and for cooperation between organisations of varying backgrounds and sizes (e.g. humanitarian actors, civil protection actors, development actors, volunteering organisations).

Stakeholders considered that identical, centralised training for potential volunteers provided a clear added value compared to other volunteering schemes.[59]

The initiative has the potential to increase its EU added value in the future, because it is open not only to DG ECHO's Framework Partnership Agreement partners, but to all EU-based organisations that engage or intend to engage in humanitarian aid. While organisations from countries which joined the EU after 2004[60] make up 3 % of partners

[57] External evaluation report p. 45.
[58] External evaluation report p. 192.
[59] External evaluation report p. 46.
[60] Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia

(7 out of 204), they make up 20 % of the certified organisations in the EU Aid Volunteers initiative[61].

6. CONCLUSIONS

The interviews the external evaluator carried out with the various stakeholder groups found that the initiative's five objectives, as set out in the Regulation, are **relevant** for the initiative's beneficiaries, sending and hosting organisations and volunteers. Local communities find particularly useful those activities that encourage local volunteering and capacity building to improve skills locally to prepare for disasters. In general, the different actions carried out under the initiative are relevant to the initiative's objectives, while the objective of communicating the EU's humanitarian aid principles is only considered relevant by a small number of stakeholders (mainly volunteers). This means more attention is required on this point in the initiative's communication activities. Interest from established DG ECHO Framework Partnership Agreement partners remains very low, which is problematic for an initiative that is supposed to serve the humanitarian aid sector. Sending and hosting organisations that participate in the initiative have a relatively positive view about the initiative's ability to meet their needs, and manage to deploy volunteers with the right profiles in line with the needs of hosting organisations. The objective to communicate the Union's humanitarian aid principles is only relevant for few stakeholders (mainly volunteers) and would need more attention in communication activities.

The initiative has not been **effective** in achieving its five objectives, also due to the fact that the initiative did not meet the targets set in the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework. The budget in the first three years was not fully used, although the figures for 2017 saw a strong uptake in funding for capacity building / technical assistance. The numbers of volunteers, although increasing, remain well below the target. The main reason for this is the barriers to participation, such as the certification of organisations or the need to form partnerships with other organisations to apply for EU funding. These have posed a particular challenge for organisations that do not operate in established networks. The search for consortium partners and the administrative procedures to manage a consortium hampers effectiveness. The effectiveness of the recruitment process could be further improved by speeding up procedures. The initiative provided a limited contribution to improving the EU's capacity to provide humanitarian aid to date, given its small budget and the slow uptake. There is some evidence from the evaluation surveys that volunteers feel that their skills have improved through the deployment. The few placements offered through the initiative in its early years increased the opportunities for people to contribute to humanitarian aid. There is no evidence so far that the volunteering standards set in the initiative have had positive effects on the national standards of EU Member States. Some organisations find the forming of consortia difficult, especially when they do not work with established networks.

[61] External evaluation report p. 45/46.

Procedures and requirements with a strong impact on the initiative's **efficiency** are regulated in detail in three legislative acts. Although this creates on the one hand a certain administrative burden for organisations, it is on the other hand positive for the experience of volunteers, because it establishes a transparent recruitment process and supports their learning and development during the deployment. New European rules and procedures for managing volunteers can be especially burdensome for organisations if they run their national volunteering scheme in parallel to the EU Aid Volunteers initiative. Within this legislative framework, the Commission constantly seeks to simplify and accelerate processes, in order to increase the initiative's attractiveness to stakeholders. The application, selection and reporting procedures appear particularly burdensome for organisations that are mainly active in EU humanitarian aid (emergency response) projects, which follow lighter procedures and are exempt from the Commission's normal grant management procedures. An efficient monitoring system was put in place, which could be further developed to process qualitative information and ad hoc reports, in addition to quantitative information. Any cost-efficiency analysis can only provide a preliminary assessment, given that no final project reports or related financial data are available at this stage. The external evaluation noted cost-conscious behaviour on the part of the Commission with regard to service contracts, which are based on the number of volunteers trained and insured. The initiative will require simpler processes, more outreach and communication about the initiative's potential positive impacts on organisations in the EU and abroad and the way the initiative works, and stronger links between the initiative and EU humanitarian and development objectives and funding.

There is room for improvement in the initiative's **coherence** with humanitarian aid, development and civil protection instruments, which could be strengthened. The initiative was not embedded in the existing EU instruments to provide humanitarian aid, but was set up as a stand-alone instrument. It does not allow volunteers to be deployed to regions of armed conflict, but the broad definition of humanitarian aid used in the EU Aid Volunteers Regulation allows volunteers to be deployed in a wide variety of projects including activities which link relief, rehabilitation and development and which support and develop the overall resilience of local communities. The initiative is not formally linked to the Sustainable Development Goals, although the majority of participating hosting organisations state that they are active in both humanitarian aid and development. The internal consistency of the actions carried out cannot be fully assessed at this stage of the initiative, but their design suggests they should be consistent with each other.

The initiative creates **EU added value** through the set-up of common standards for managing volunteers from all EU countries, common training, and funding for capacity building and technical assistance. It enables organisations with different backgrounds (e.g. humanitarian, development, civil protection, volunteering organisations) and of different sizes to work together. It is open not only to Framework Partnership Agreement partners but to all EU-based organisations that are active or intend to become active in humanitarian aid. While organisations from Member States that joined the EU after 2004 represent 3 % of Framework Partnership Agreement partners, they represent 20 % of

certified organisations. In this respect the initiative was able to involve a broad range of organisations from different EU Member States.

ANNEX 1: PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

1. LEAD DG, DECIDE PLANNING/CWP REFERENCES

European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO)

Decide Planning reference: 2017/ECHO

Commission Work Programme reference: EUAV WP 2017

2. ORGANISATION AND TIMING

The interservice steering group (ISG) ensured the quality of the external evaluation, shared all available information with the external evaluation team, commented the deliverables, and participated in the meetings. It was composed of the representatives of DG ECHO, EACEA, DG EAC and DG SG.

The contract was signed the 3 May 2017 for 7 months.

Kick off meeting — the 5 May 2017

Inception Meeting the 2 June 2017

Interim Report Meeting- the 15 September 2017

Draft Final Report Meeting: 27 October 2017

3. EXCEPTIONS TO THE BETTER REGULATION GUIDELINES

Not applicable

4. CONSULTATION OF THE RSB (IF APPLICABLE)

Not applicable

5. EVIDENCE, SOURCES AND QUALITY

The ISG members held multiple meetings during the evaluation process to share information and documents and to discuss issues, in addition to meetings to discuss deliverables with the evaluation team. The documents that the external evaluation team analysed included: annual activity reports, Commission work programmes, annual calls for proposals, the evaluation of the pilot action for EU aid volunteers, a study on approaches to assess the cost-effectiveness of DG ECHO´s humanitarian aid actions, the guidelines for deployment call for proposals, the impact assessment and proposal for a

Regulation establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps. Information collected during the research phase was complemented by and triangulated with results from the open public consultation and other stakeholder surveys carried out by the external evaluation team during the evaluation process. The field missions to carefully selected countries, covering the most illustrative examples of implementation of the initiative, also provided information. In total, the evaluation team conducted 120 individual interviews with representatives from 52 organisations, carried out 6 targeted surveys and organised a number of focus groups.

With regard to quality assurance, the ISG contributed to the whole evaluation process, and discussed and commented on all external evaluation deliverables in accordance with the relevant technical specifications. The quality of the final report was checked by the ISG to ensure it met the technical specifications, and the standards required for accuracy, completeness of data, relevance and soundness of analyses, evidence based conclusions, and usefulness of recommendations. Comments provided were fully taken into account by the external evaluation team.

ANNEX 2: STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Six targeted written surveys (questionnaires) were drafted by the external contractor and sent to the following stakeholder groups:

(1) DG ECHO Framework Partnership Agreement partners (international non-governmental organisations) which are not involved in the initiative and who also did not participate in pilot projects as a lead or partner organisation.

(2) Organisations that participated in the pilot phase, but are not yet involved in the initiative.

(3) EU-based organisations which are certified, have received technical assistance or have provided technical assistance.

(4) Non EU-based organisations which have received capacity-building assistance or hosted volunteers.

(5) EU aid volunteers (selected, about to be trained, trained, deployed, and returned).

(6) Member State representatives (Humanitarian Aid Committee / Council Working Group on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid / Council Working Group on Civil Protection).

The external contractor also conducted more than 120 individual interviews with representatives from 52 external organisations, DG ECHO officials, officials from other DGs, EACEA, Member State representatives and other stakeholders:

Stakeholder group	Individual interviews	Organisations / institutions
EUAV sending organisations / EU partners / Recipients of technical assistance	41	15
EUAV hosting organisations	26	22
EUAVs (deployed and during training)	20	n/a
European Commission and staff (including: DG ECHO and its Regional Security Officers / Country Offices, DG DEVCO, DG EAC, EEAS, and EACEA)	18	5
Sector service organisations and associations / universities	8	4
Member State representatives	4	2
Others (e.g. Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) partners/ Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) partners, training consortium)	5	4
Total	**122**	**52**

Source: external evaluation report p. 12

Three field missions were carried out by the external contractor:

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 and 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

Source: external evaluation report p. 13

The results of the open public consultation are set out below.

ANALYSIS OF THE OPEN PUBLIC CONSULTATION

An open public consultation was organised as part of the interim evaluation of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative ('the initiative'). The objective of the open public consultation was to give EU citizens and other stakeholders an opportunity to express their views on the way the initiative has performed during the first three years of its implementation.

At the end of July 2017, the European Commission launched a consultation on the implementation and performance to date of the initiative. The consultation period ran for a full three months (until 31 October 2017) and was open to individuals, public sector and private sector organisations.

The consultation 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 prior knowledge of the initiative. The survey asked specific questions and provided the opportunity for free-text responses.

Participation

In total the open public consultation 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 prior knowledge of the initiative.

Respondents were also given the 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 consultation should be considered when interpreting the its findings.

- There was a very limited number of respondents (30 in total for both surveys).
- The respondents to the survey opted in (decided themselves to participate, while the other invitees decided 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 that the evaluation had not reached in other ways.

Respondents to the surveys provided a large number of comments which cannot all be set out in detail but which have informed the evaluation. The key results of both surveys are presented below. Information including the original data set with all responses and FOCSIV's comments were provided to DG ECHO, along with FOCSIV's position paper, for information and consideration.

OPC RESULTS FROM RESPONDENTS WITH IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE ABOUT EU AID VOLUNTEERS

The results set out below relate to **respondents with in-depth knowledge** about EUAV (a second survey captured the opinion of less informed respondents).

Summary of findings

Altogether, 19 responses to this survey were provided from 15 organisations and 4 individual respondents. Most of the institutional respondents are EUAV-certified sending or hosting organisations. Therefore, the results as a whole predominantly represent the opinion of EUAV-implementing stakeholders.

Information about the EUAV initiative

The large majority of respondents are positive about the quality and completeness of information about EUAV (84 % of the respondents). Free-text comments indicate that all required information about EUAV is available online but they suggest presenting it using less complex language and a simpler 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 current needs for disaster risk management and resilience in third countries. Only 36 % of the respondents indicate that these needs are addressed to a large extent or fully. Comments indicated that some respondents see a high potential for engaging skilled volunteers but at present, consider that there is more focus on the volunteering aspects and less on impact, especially community impact. Others indicate that the description of the initiative is not focused enough (e.g. it is not clear if EUAV is about learning opportunities for volunteers or local community capacity improvement in disaster risk management).

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 for EUAV to show solidarity. In order to further improve value it adds, one organisation strongly suggests including to include the possibility to provide funding for local volunteers in the approach to EUAV.

EU response capacity — A clear majority of respondents agree that volunteering is a suitable approach to improving the EU'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. However, 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 EU's image — Most respondents agree that there is a positive impact on the EU's image from EUAV (58 %). In free-text comments, several respondents highlight that there is significant potential to improve the EU's image in third countries, but they note that the volunteers need to address particular needs and that any positive impact depends on their skills, attitude and on the added value they bring to the host communities. However some critical voices indicate that there needs to be more 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 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 saw as least effective 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 draw conclusions on impact.

Coherence

Respondents to the consultation have a mixed opinion on the coherence of EUAV with other EU activities. Coherence with other disaster risk management (55 % agreement) and community resilience (53 %) focused activities of the EU is seen as relatively high but 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 any practical alignment with either of these fields (e.g. DG ECHO field offices are not involved, and there are no obvious links with disaster risk reduction projects funded by DG DEVCO).

EU added value

The assessment of the EU added value provided by the initiative varies depending on the aspect analysed. Higher ratings are received in relation to '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 given 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 initiative's standards as its main achievement and added value at European level, while some 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 provided by the initiative.

Effectiveness

With respect to the effectiveness in achieving EUAV operational objectives, respondents are generally quite critical. The best scores are given to the effectiveness of 'improving skills and knowledge of volunteers', where 63 % of respondents agree that EUAV was effective in achieving this objective. All other aspects receive less than 50 % agreement. Particularly low scores are given for the EUAV impact on 'increased awareness' (26 % agreement) and the 'enhancement of coherence and consistency of humanitarian volunteering in the EU' (32 % agreement). Several respondents highlight that it is too early to judge the initiative's effectiveness after only 3 years and with only a small number of volunteers who have returned and projects that have been completed. For some respondents the certification and application process is in need of improvement to stimulate further engagement and to include more organisations.

Efficiency

The efficiency of EUAV in '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 disaster risk reduction capacities in third countries' and 'to build resilient communities' only 42 % of the respondents in each case agree that EUAV is an efficient mechanism. Comments provided by the respondents are varied but two statements highlight areas of identified inefficiency: the complex procedural framework, and the limited flexibility in deployment (e.g. a minimum requirement of 4 weeks for deployments).

Capacity building

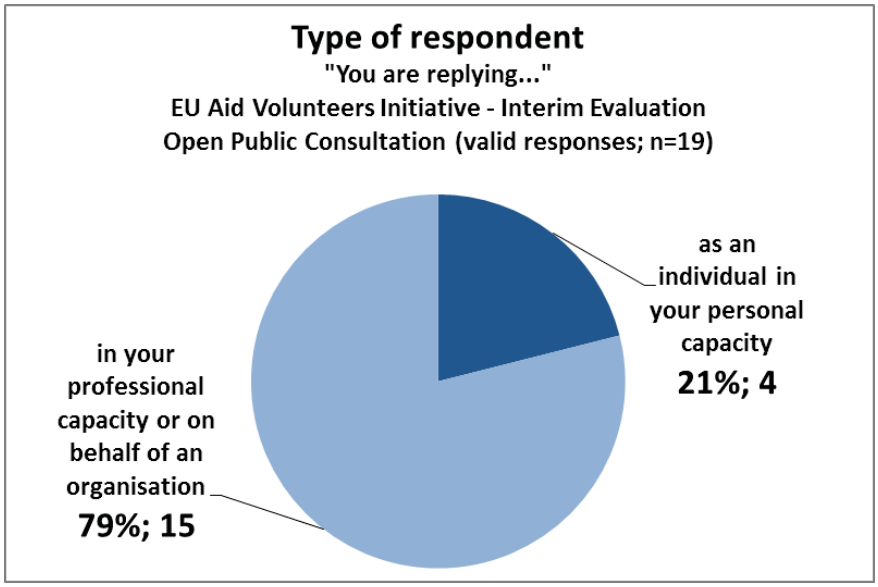
More than 68 % of the respondents agree that capacity building provided by EUAV projects has the potential to contribute to resilience building in host communities. Respondents are convinced that there is significant potential to improve resilience through EUAV volunteers and some have experienced positive impacts 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.

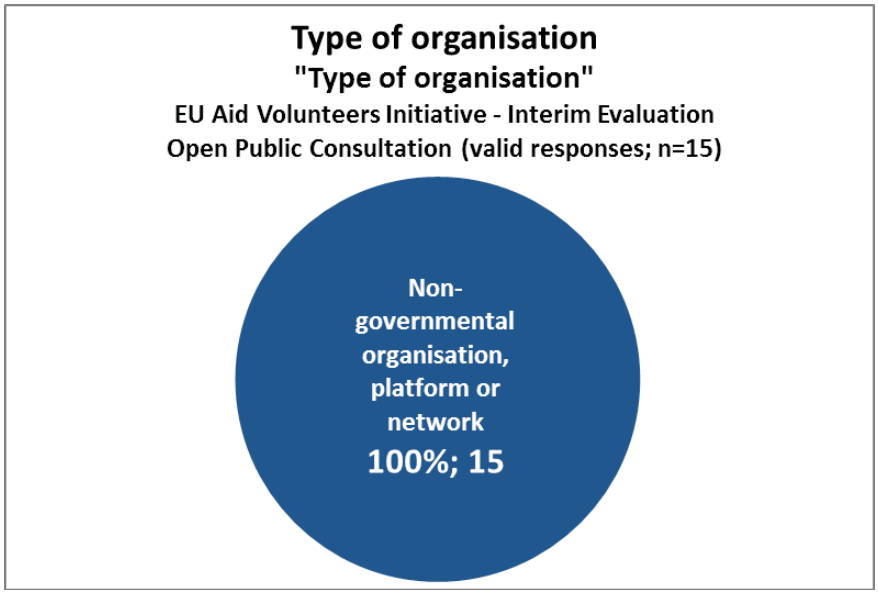
Technical assistance

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, it is perceived as complicated and technical assistance concentrated on improving volunteer management and assisting organisations to become EUAV certified is not seen by respondents as directly helping to improve EU response capacity.

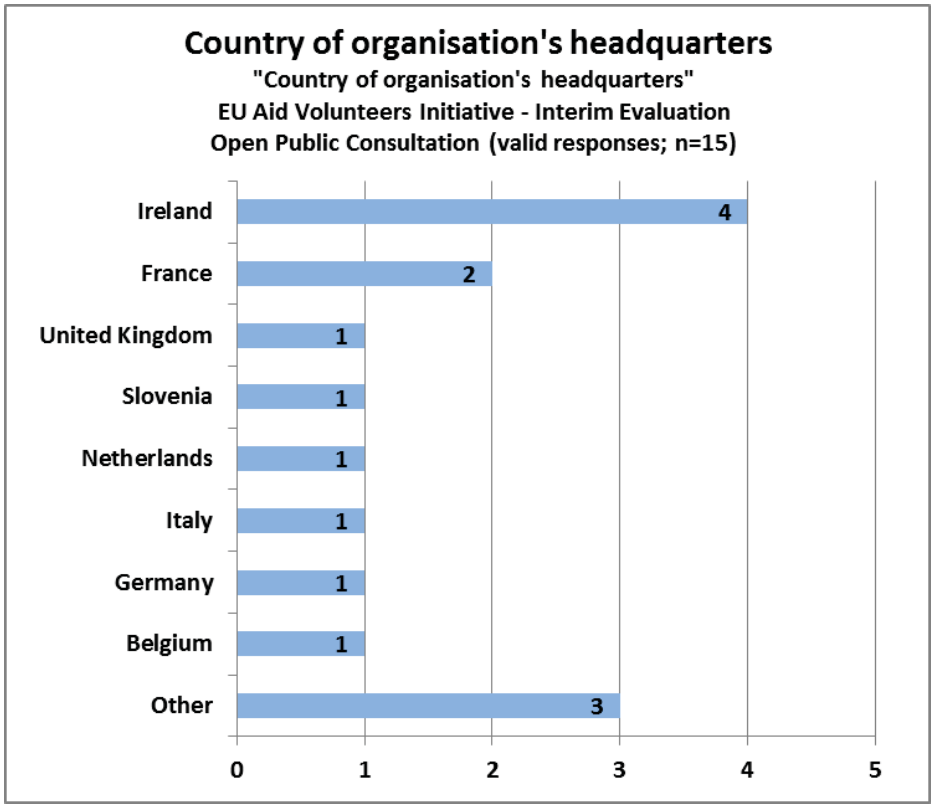
Respondents to the survey

Altogether, 19 responses were 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 non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

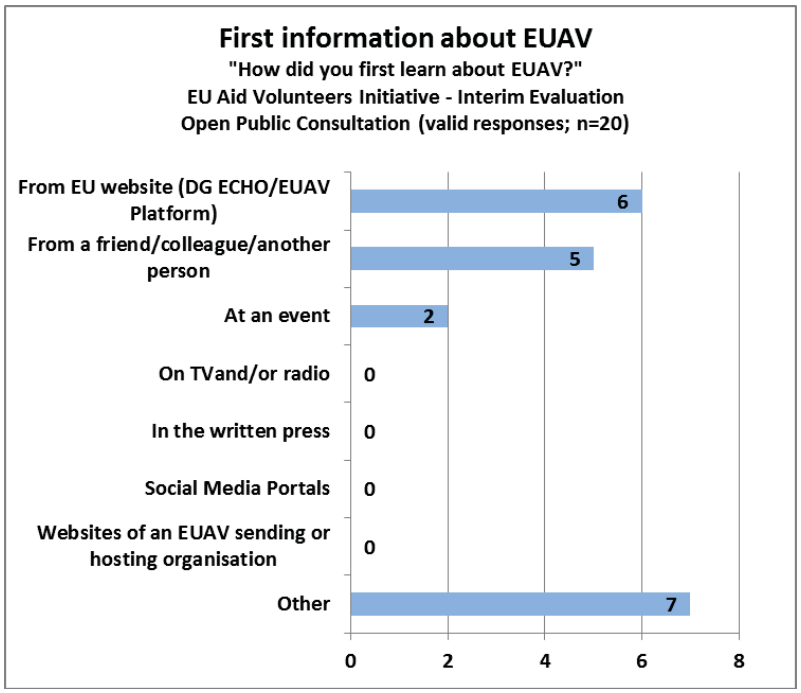




➔ All institutional responses to the consultation come from non-governmental organisations.



Information about EUAV



➔ 'Others' are mostly EUAV partners and are therefore well-informed implementing stakeholders.

OPC RESULTS FROM RESPONDENTS WITHOUT IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE ABOUT EU AID VOLUNTEERS

The results set out below 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 first learnt about EUAV from a friend or from the EU websites. Only a minority of respondents feel they have sufficient information on the initiative (27 %). The 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 respondents are 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 EU's humanitarian response capacity (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 a 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 %). There are lower levels of agreement on the initiative's impact on 'disaster preparedness and management' (54 %) and on 'community disaster risk reduction' (54 %), however a majority of the respondents still agree that the initiative provides benefits in these areas.

Capacity building

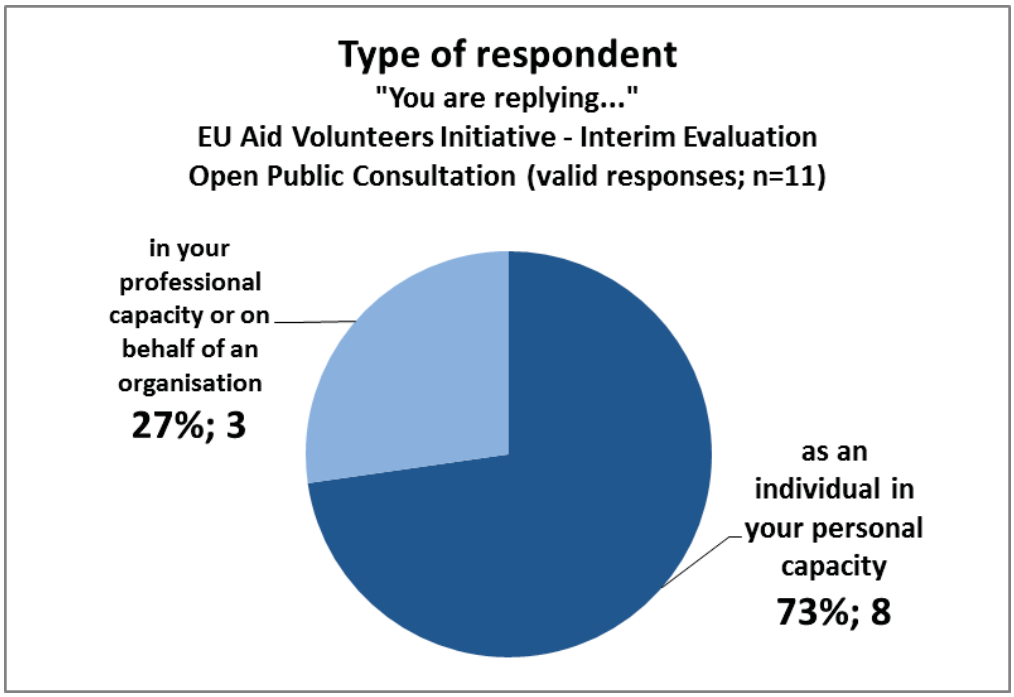
The majority of the respondents (54 %) are convinced that the capacity building of civil society organisations in third countries organised by EUAV helps build community resilience. One response stated with respect to resilience building: *'Most civil society organisations in the third world countries 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 characterised by flooding).'*

Technical assistance

The majority of the respondents agree (64 %) that 'strengthening civil society organisations (CSOs) in the EU by providing technical assistance' by EUAV contributes to the EU's humanitarian response capacity. 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 were received from 8 individual respondents and 3 responding organisations.



➔ The majority of respondents are responding as individuals (73 % or 8 persons).

ANNEX 3: FACTS & FIGURES

1. Overview of funded EUAV capacity-building projects (2015-2017)

Year	Applicant	Number of EU partners	Number of third country partners	Total partners	EU Countries	Third countries	Topics
2015	France Volontaires, France	4	5	9	France, Ireland, Italy	Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ecuador, Philippines	Volunteering in Humanitarian Aid - Hosting Organisations
2015	Civil Protection, Italy	7	4	11	Italy, Hungary, Romania	Kosovo, Albania, FYROM	Balkans and Europe for development of resilience initiatives
2015	GVC, Italy	4	5	9	Italy, Germany, Hungary, Spain	Nicaragua, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Haiti	Maximise the capacity of hosting organsiations to be involved and prepared to the EU Aid Volunteers programme
2015	Caritas, Austria	3	7	10	Austria, Romania Czech Republic	Thailand, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Myanmar	European-Asian Partnership for Capacity Building in Humanitarian Action
2015	ICCO, Netherlands	8	5	13	The Netherlands, Czech Republic, UK, Denmark, Finland	Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Uganda	ACT for humanitarian capacity development in the EU Aid Volunteers initiaitve
2015	ADICE, France	3	11	14	France, Italy, Estonia	Peru, Bolivia, Ukraine, Palestinian Territory, Thailand, Ghana, India, Uganda, Nepal, Kenya	Platform on humanitarian aid for sustainable empowerment
	Total 2015	**29**	**37**	**66**			
2016	ADICE, France	3	9	12	France, Slovakia, Hungary	Albania, Morocco, Algeria, Georgia, Serbia	Reinforecment and sustainability in humanitarian volunteering management
2016	La Guilde, France	4	3	7	France, Greece, Ireland	Myanmar, Togo, Peru	EU Aid Volunteers for you: Hosting Organisations
	Total 2016	**7**	**12**	**19**			
2017	Caritas Austria	3	9	12	Austria, Czech Republic, Romania	Bangladesh, India, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Myanmar, Indonesia, Thailand	European-Asian Partnership for Capacity Building in Humanitarian Action
2017	Movimiento por la Paz, Spain	2	8	10	Spain, Italy	Nicaragua, Guatemala, Colombia, Jordan	Strengthening organisational capacity for humanitarian volunteer management.
2017	DanChurchAid, Denmark	2	3	5	Denmark, Greece	Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Gender sensitive humanitarian aid volunteering
2017	VSO, UK	2	9	11	UK, The Netherlands	Ethiopia, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Nepal, Bangladesh, Philippines, Kenya, Uganda, Cambodia	Building capacity in Asia and Africa for preparedness and better humanitarian effectiveness through local engagement and volunteering
2017	Engineers without Borders, Denmark	3	6	9	Denmark, Sweden, Slovakia	Nepal, Norway, Tanzania	Platform for technical humanitarian capacity building
2017	Alianza por los Derechos, Spain	3	17	20	Spain, Greece, Italy	Haiti, El Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Peru, Cuba	Development of capacities for the creation of livelihoods, legal protection, health and psychological support for migrants in Central America
2017	Medicos Del Mundo, Spain	5	9	14	Spain, Belgium, UK, The Netherlands, Sweden	Morocco, Ukraine, Burkina Faso, Benin, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Honduras	Capacity Building for participation in the EU Aid Volunteers initiative
2017	Civil Protection, Italy	9	5	14	Italy, Hungary, Romania	Serbia, Montenegro	Volunteer-based international on line asset
2017	GVC, Italy	4	11	15	Italy, Spain	Palestinian Territory, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Syria, Mauritania	Community-based protecion approach to build resilience and LRRD
2017	Accion Contra el Hambre, Spain	3	8	11	Spain, Italy	Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras	Development of capacities for the creation of livelihoods, legal protection, health and psychological support for migrants in Central America
2017	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development	2	12	14	UK, France	Togo, Liberia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Sierea Leone, USA, Switzerland	Preparing for emergencies by strengthening organisational procedures, learning and exchange
2017	Croix-Rouge, France	2	4	6	France, Belgium	Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Lebanon	Capacity building for volunteer management and disaster management.
2017	Associazione Solidarieta Paesi Emergenti, Italy	3	7	10	Italy, France, Spain	Morocco, Peru, Bolivia, Indonesia, Ghana, India	European Volunteers in Humanitarian Aid
2017	France Volontaires, France	3	3	6	France, Italy	Tunisia, Moroco, Mauritania	Capacity building for resilience of oasis
	Total 2017	**46**	**111**	**157**			
	Grand Total	**82**	**160**	**242**			
	Note: not all partners receive funding; some are associated with the project						

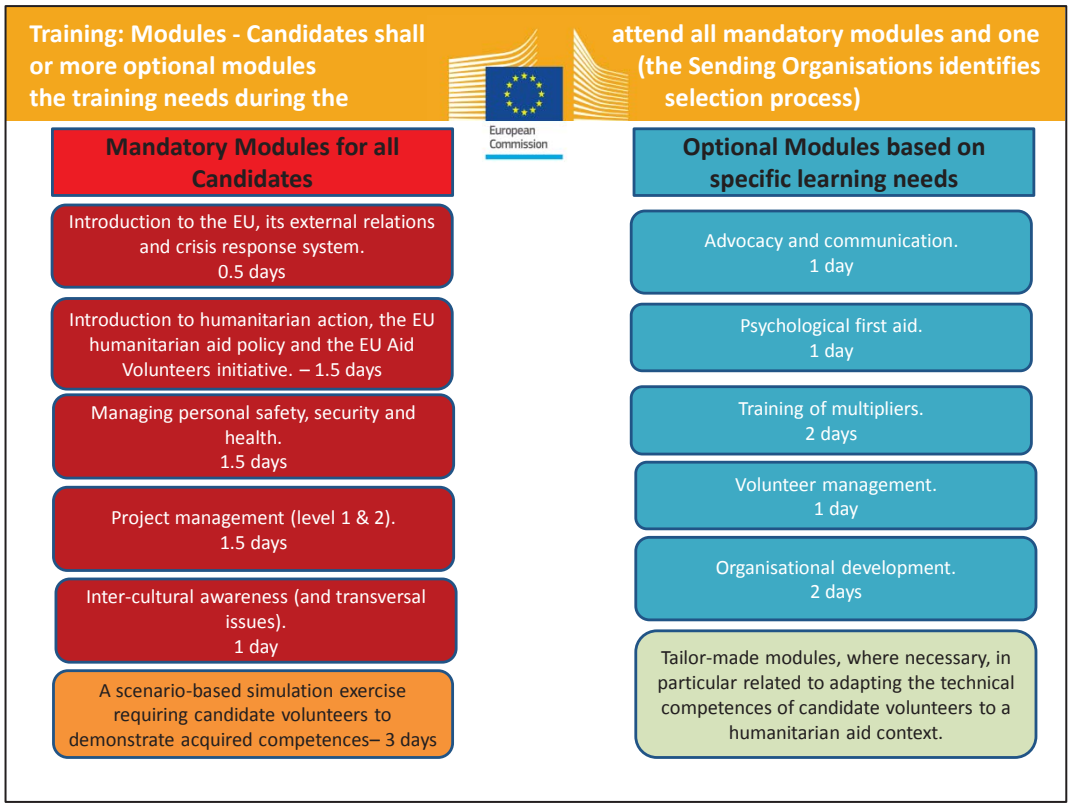
2. Overview of funded EUAV technical assistance projects (2015-2017)

Year	Applicant	Number of partners	from EU Countries	Topics
2015	La Guilde, France	10	France, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Italy, UK, Hungary, Cyprus, Slovenia	Volunteering in humanitarian aid - Sending Organisations
2015	Alianza por los Derechos, Spain	4	Spain, Hungary, Italy, UK	Bringing the value of volunteers and CSO to EU humanitarian response: achieving high-quality standards, outreach to EU citizens reinforcing our civil society capacities to respond to humanitarian crises.
2015	Concern Worldwide, Ireland	3	Ireland, France, Czech Republic	Strengthening Human Resource capacity for volunteer management and humanitarian response.
2015	Polish Humanitarian Aid, Poland	5	Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Estonia	Technical Assistance for humanitarian aid organisations from Central Eastern Europe to enable efficient deployment of volunteers
	Total 2015	**22**		
2016	La Guilde, France	6	France, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Malta	EU Aid Volunteers for you: Sending Organisatins
2016	Medicos del Mundo, Spain	6	Spain, Greece, UK, The Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium	Developing technical structures for aid volunteerism - MDM
2016	GVC, Italy	10	Italy, Estonia, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, Slovenia, Lithuania	More and better EU Aid Volunteers: enhancing technical capacity of European organisations and improving opportunities for EU Citizens to participate in humanitarian aid actions
	Total 2016	**22**		
2017	Danish Refugee Council, Denmark	4	Denmark, UK, The Netherlands	European Diaspora Volunteers - Technical Assistance for diaspora humanitarian organisations
2017	Alianza por los Derechos, Spain	7	Spain, Greece, Italy, Romania, UK	More to care: encouraging certification and strengthening EUAV management capacities of European Sending Organisations
2017	Federation International des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant Rouge, Switzerland	5	Switzerland, Italia, Bulgaria, The Netherlands, Austria	Enhancing Aid Capacities
2017	Caritas, Austria	6	Austria, Belgium, UK, Czech Republic, Romania, Ireland	EUAV TEACH - Assistance for Caritas Organisations in Humanitarian Aid
	Total 2017	**22**		
	Grand Total	**66**		

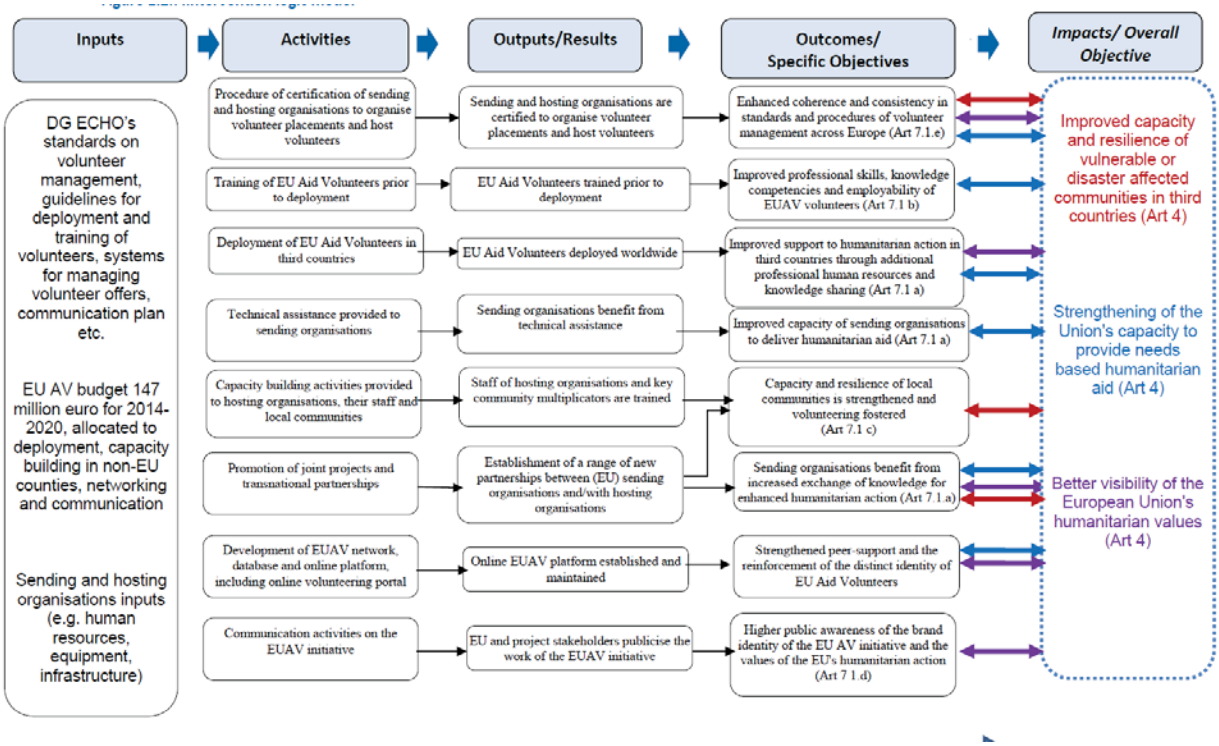
3. Overview of certified sending organisations active / not active in deployment (2015-2017)

	Organisation	Country	FPA	active in deployment		
				2015	2016	2017
1	Acción Contra El Hambre	ES	FPA	not active	not active	active
2	ACTED	FR	FPA	active	active	not active
3	Action Contre la Faim	FR	FPA	not active	not active	not active
4	Actionaid Hellas	EL	--	not active	active	active
5	ADICE	FR	-	not active	not active	active
6	Alianza por los Derechos	ES	FPA	active	active	active
7	ASPEM (Associazione Solidarieta Paesi Emergenti)	IT	--	not active	not active	active
8	Caritas Austria	AT	FPA	not active	not active	active
9	Concern Worldwide	IE	FPA	active	active	not active
10	DanChurchAid	DK	FPA	not active	active	not active
11	Debreceni Egyetem Kulonleges Orvos	HU	--	not active	not active	not active
12	Diakonia CCE	CZ	--	not active	active	not active
13	Doctors of the World	UK	--	not active	not active	active
14	Esi Labs	LV	--	not active	not active	not active
15	Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW)	DE	FPA	not active	not active	not active
16	Finn Church Aid	FI	FPA	not active	active	not active
17	Finnish Red Cross	FI	FPA	not active	not active	not active
18	FOCSIV	IT	--	not active	not active	not active
19	France Volontaires	FR	--	not active	not active	not active
20	German Red Cross	DE	FPA	not active	not active	not active
21	Gondwana	IT	--	not active	not active	not active
22	Gruppo di Voluntariato Civile	IT	FPA	active	active	active
23	ICCO	NL	FPA	not active	active	not active
24	Magyar Önkéneteskü ldö Alapitvany	HU	--	not active	not active	active
25	Medecins du Monde	BE	FPA	not active	not active	active
26	Medicos Del Mundo	ES	FPA	not active	not active	active
27	Mondo	EE	--	not active	not active	active
28	Movimento por la Paz - MPDL	ES	FPA	not active	not active	not active
29	Pan Cyprian Volunteerism Coordination Council	CY	--	not active	not active	not active
30	People in Need (Clovek V Tisni Ops)	CZ	FPA	active	active	not active
31	The European Guild	FR	--	active	active	not active
32	The Organisation for Poverty Alleviation and Development	SE	--	not active	not active	not active
33	Trócaire	IE	FPA	not active	not active	active
34	Voluntary Service Overseas	UK	--	not active	not active	not active
35	Voluntary Service Overseas	NL	--	not active	not active	not active
36	Zavod Voluntariat	SI	--	not active	not active	not active

4. Figure 4: Overview of training modules for candidate volunteers



ANNEX 4: INTERVENTION LOGIC EU AID VOLUNTEERS



ANNEX 5: LIST OF EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation is based on the following evaluation questions:

1. To what extent was the Initiative **relevant**?

Issues to consider are, e.g.:

   a. 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.

   b. Fit between the objectives and the types of action funded under the Initiative. Does the implementation during the evaluation period leave any particular gaps to be addressed in the coming period?

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

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

3. 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.

4. To what extent was the Initiative **effective**?

   a. To what extent have the objectives been achieved through the implementation of the actions (covering both pre-deployment and deployment)?

   b. To what extent has the communication strategy contributed to generate increased public awareness of the Initiative and the EU's role in the field of humanitarian aid?

   c. To what extent has the Initiative reached new organisations that have not previously worked with the Commission, and promoted new partnerships between organisations?

   d. 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?

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

   f. 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?

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

5. To what extent was the Initiative **efficient**?

a. 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?

b. 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?

c. 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 Initiative?

d. 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?