Evaluation

Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development (APPEAR)

Mid-term evaluation

Final Report

Austrian
Development Cooperation

Imprint

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This is an independent evaluation report. Views and conclusions expressed do not necessarily represent those of the contractors.

Abbreviations

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
ADC	Austrian Development Cooperation
APPEAR	Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
FH	Austrian Fachhochschulen (university of applied sciences)
FMEIA	Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs
HE	Higher education
KEF	Commission for Development Studies
LAI	Austrian Latin America Institute
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NICHE	Netherlands Initiative for Capacity Development in Higher Education
NUFFIC	Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education
OeAD	Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRSP	Poverty reduction strategy paper
SB	APPEAR Selection Board
SC	APPEAR Steering Committee
TEC	Tender Evaluation Committee (of Nuffic NICHE programme)
TOR	Terms of reference
UNIKO	Universities Austria
VLIR	Flemish Interuniversity Council
VLIR-UOS	Flemish Interuniversity Council Institutional University Cooperation programme

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Executive summary

Background

1. The Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development (APPEAR), began in 2010 and is a five-year programme based on the Strategy for Higher Education and Scientific Cooperation of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) intended to implement the Strategy's defined principles, specifications and best standards. It replaces a diverse range of scholarship schemes without developmental or geographical focus, funded by ADC, which are being phased out.
2. APPEAR is a programme to strengthen institutional capacities in higher education, research and management in most of the key regions of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) through partnerships between academic and/or research institutions in these regions and Austrian academic institutions. The objectives are to improve the quality in teaching and research, to make the management and the administration of the institutions involved more effective and to strengthen scientific dialogue nationally and internationally.
3. APPEAR currently has two components, the first with a focus on academic partnerships, in which the programme funds well-designed, collaborative projects that respond to identified demands in the partner countries[1] and institutions. The second component, intended to be closely related to the academic partnerships, supports students and academics with grants for Master's and PhD programmes in Austria.
4. APPEAR is funded by ADA and the programme is managed by a consortium of the Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research (OeAD) and the Austrian Latin America Institute (LAI).

Introduction

5. The ADA commissioned a Mid-term Evaluation of APPEAR to assess the first phase of the APPEAR programme in September 2012, according to the ADA Higher Education (HE) Strategy, the terms of reference (TOR) of the programme management contract tender and the programme documents (the contracting and programme implementation documents).
6. The evaluation assessed only the programme level itself (meta and macro levels) and not the granted projects.

Research methods

7. Document review and analysis focused on programme policy, strategy and implementation procedures. Documents relating to the current APPEAR project portfolio (proposals, plans, monitoring data or reports etc.) were also sampled to contribute towards evidence of programme effectiveness and the efficacy of procedures in Phase 1: the full documentation for 16 proposals, including the peer reviews, was reviewed.
8. Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with the majority of informants in stakeholder organisations in Austria identified by ADA (21 interviews). Where this proved impossible, discussions were held by telephone (nine interviews).
9. Interviews with South project coordinators (four), and Steering Committee (SC) (one) members located in other countries were invited and subsequently conducted by telephone/Skype with those who responded to the invitations.

[1] Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Bhutan, Nepal and the Palestinian Territories

10. Short online surveys were distributed to APPEAR peer reviewers (49 responses from an OeAD/LAI distribution list of 140); vice-rectors of Austrian universities (four responses); vice-rectors of Fachhochschulen (FH) (one response); ADA Coordinators (four responses).

Main findings and conclusions

11. Overall, the evaluation team concludes that the APPEAR programme in conception, design and implementation during Phase 1 has been a success. The transition from a disparate range of untargeted scholarships driven by largely academic goals to a coherent international HE cooperation programme with explicit developmental goals is a considerable achievement on the part of ADA; and the subsequent successful management of programme implementation can be attributed mainly to OeAD/LAI.

Relevance

Development relevance

12. The APPEAR programme embodies the approach, principles and priorities of the ADC HE Strategy and is broadly consistent with international approaches to development cooperation, e.g. the Paris Declaration, though there are some areas of weakness, notably harmonisation and complementarity with other donor-funded support to HE and research, and managing by results. The programme would benefit from establishing the basis for results-based management, in order to assess programme effectiveness (the cumulative effect of the elements of the programme over time) more coherently and to be able to make comparisons across regions/countries etc.

Visibility of development related issues

13. The APPEAR programme Phase 1 in its first three years has already made a good contribution to the greater visibility of development-related issues in the Austrian academic community, evident through the response to the Calls for proposals. For many Austrian academics, however, understanding the specific development context and cultural and social differences that determine choices and priorities for their South partners remains a challenge.

Effectiveness

Contract model of programme management

14. Overall, the evidence suggests that the method by which the contract to manage APPEAR was tendered and awarded has led to effective implementation of the programme. The lessons learned from Phase 1 of the programme should provide the basis for improved programme design for the tender for Phase 2.
15. However, the limited contract period (three years plus two-year prolongation) significantly constrained the work of the management consortium in implementing the programme as designed by ADA.

Programme leadership and management

16. Overall, the leadership and management arrangements for the programme are not well or clearly defined in the programme documentation (contracts, TOR, etc.). Without these clearly defined roles and responsibilities it is not possible to assess the performance or effectiveness of either ADA or the managing consortium in fulfilling them.
17. Leadership and management are different functions which need clear differentiation, particularly between the roles and responsibilities of ADA, ultimately responsible for the programme, and OeAD/LAI, the contracted programme manager. Our findings lead us to conclude, for example, that the ADA Education and Science Adviser has been too involved in making decisions and solving problems on individual projects, rather than focusing on the provision of strategic direction and leadership at programme level. The evaluation report provides an example of the different

and overlapping responsibilities appropriate to leadership and management in this context (Annex 4).

18. An appropriate separation between leadership and management is also poorly reflected in the selection process. Selection of projects for funding is a fundamental part of programme management, and OeAD/LAI is responsible and accountable to ADA for the outcomes of that process. The work of the Selection Board (SB) is a crucial and decisive element in the selection process. The SB is first and foremost an instrument of programme management, not oversight or leadership, and should be chaired by the programme manager. The evaluation report offers examples from other European HE and research cooperation for development programmes.
19. Equally, the Steering Committee (SC), meeting only once a year, is not and cannot be effective in supervising and monitoring the programme, yet does not currently provide an effective strategic advisory function to either OeAD/LAI or ADA. In considering how to make the SC more effective, it should be recognised that it is an instrument of oversight and strategic leadership (not programme management) and as such its function should be to support and/or advise ADA as leader of the APPEAR programme.

Programme structure and parameters

Separation of partnership project and scholarship components

20. The separation of partnership projects from scholarships, while arguably appropriate to the circumstances of Phase 1 of the programme for legacy reasons, looks increasingly redundant as Phase 1-funded project partnerships mature. The synchronisation of scholarships and project partnerships will need some thought. Project partnerships should not be under pressure to nominate PhD and Master students only in the first year of the project. Scholarship candidates are likely to emerge as the projects develop and be able then to contribute to the sustainability of the projects, and scholars may need to be supported beyond the formal end of the project.

Preparatory and full project proposals

21. The current structure of separate preparatory funding applications contributes significantly to the time-consuming and labour-intensive nature of the overall APPEAR funding application process and imposes quite a burden of work upon potential partner institutions. However, the opportunity to get preparatory grants to enable potential partnership meetings and facilitate the development of quality full project proposals is greatly appreciated by applicants and should not be lost if the programme were to be restructured.

Eligible countries

22. The list of ADC priority countries is getting shorter, with ADC withdrawal from the Central American region. It would be detrimental to Austrian HE interests to reduce the list of eligible countries any further. There are good arguments for retaining all originally eligible countries in APPEAR, regardless of whether the country or region is still an ADC priority. This would enable sustainability measures to take place, such as follow-up projects, expanding national networks of institutions benefiting from and building on Austrian collaboration. Retaining engagement in APPEAR for countries in which ADC is otherwise withdrawing might also help to ameliorate the politically negative effects of withdrawal.

Thematic constraints

23. The omission of health from the APPEAR thematic focus was noted with concern by a few of those consulted. While there are several other key disciplines also omitted from APPEAR for which arguments could be made, the evaluation team concludes that public health (excluding medical doctor education) is a potentially important contribution to the APPEAR thematic focus. The FHs could contribute significantly in this disciplinary area in both institutional capacity development and scholarships, possibly resulting in their greater involvement in APPEAR.

Timescales

24. The maximum length for a partnership project is currently too short. All experience from APPEAR Phase 1 and other bi-lateral HE development programmes focusing on research and institutional capacity development indicates that for the first six months to one year a project can be subject to delays and setbacks as the project partners build a working relationship.

Budgetary constraints

25. Levels of funding for APPEAR projects seem adequate and realistic for the scale of partnerships and activities so far proposed. However, there are a number of budgetary constraints on planning and implementation which could be reconsidered in Phase 2; for example, the maximum allowable institutional overhead (currently 7%) has been found to be too constricting by several project partners.

Application and selection procedures

26. The current application and selection procedures have proved to be effective in delivering good quality, APPEAR-funded projects, but at the expense of some elements of transparency for applicants and other stakeholders. They also currently involve lengthy, time-consuming and repetitive procedures that are fundamentally inefficient for all stakeholders, particularly applicants (for example, in developing a preparatory proposal and then a full proposal).
27. Although the documentation for the programme is a model of plain language and straightforward guidance, it lacks coherence and clarity in a number of aspects: for example, the five basic principles are only mentioned in the Guidelines for Applicants and not in documents intended for other stakeholders in the selection process. These anomalies can and, no doubt, will be revised and improved for Phase 2 of the programme.
28. The criteria used for selection are not, in practice, as transparent as they seem to be from the documentation: there are undocumented factors and decisions introduced in the SB, such as 'geographical balance', that could be open to query and that cannot always be adequately defended e.g. if peer reviewers' scores are overruled in the SB.

Partner identification

29. During Phase 1 the main method of partner identification for North institutions has been through past and current PhD scholars from priority country universities. One outcome of the reliance on PhD student connections, and of academics' natural inclination to seek out the highest quality research partners, has been to push institutions towards the 'donor darlings' in the South: the large, prestigious, HE institutions with international reputations.
30. It is arguable from the Austrian political perspective that this is a mistaken approach for APPEAR. In comparison with most other European and North American HE development assistance initiatives, APPEAR is a small programme. Being 'a small fish in a large pool' of other, richer donors is not conducive to maximising the impact of APPEAR in terms of visible and positive results in institutional capacity development and research cooperation.
31. There are considerable challenges for North partners in choosing smaller, newer, less well-resourced universities, but these challenges can be overcome if expectations and project plans are realistic and the North partner can be assured of its own real benefits from the cooperation partnership. The FHs in particular would benefit from this widening of focus of the programme.

Communications and information

32. Although the current communications and information strategy has been effective in Austria, the relevance of the programme to the FHs has not been effectively demonstrated.
33. Nor has the strategy been sufficiently focused on potential partners and the HE sector in South priority countries. The challenges of communicating about APPEAR nationally and in the HE sec-

tor are real but they can be addressed through building a better knowledge base and range of contacts.

34. If APPEAR is to be better harmonised with other international development partner activity in HE development in the South, all stakeholders need more and better information about who are the key players in HE international cooperation. This kind of information is publicly available but from a diverse and wide-ranging number of sources: it is a significant, but not impossible, research and information task that would benefit APPEAR in allowing potential and real opportunities for better programme focus and synergies with other programmes.
35. More general information provision about HE institutions, especially small, less well-known universities, in the South priority countries would also greatly benefit Austrian universities and FHs wishing to engage in APPEAR but lacking direct contacts with South partner institutions.

Implementation of the gender strategy

36. The gender strategy has so far only been partially successful and, in some areas, not fully implemented. Gender mainstreaming and embedding gender aspects into project content are evidently intractable problems for many project partnerships. The steps that can be taken by the managing consortium to maintain attention on gender aspects include preference for female scholars with appropriate qualifications and adopting a more proactive approach to helping applicants strengthen gender aspects of project proposals.

Lessons learned

Building experience in and understanding of development issues

37. For many North partner institutions and project team members, unused to working in development or international contexts, understanding the specific development context and cultural and social differences that determine choices and priorities for their South partners will remain a challenge. As institutional and programme experience grows, project partnerships may demonstrate greater realism about cultural and social environments, ways of working etc. among partners and about what can realistically be achieved in these contexts.

Communications priorities

38. As APPEAR project implementation proceeds in Phase 2, two communications priorities emerge: to transfer the experience and lessons learned about working in development contexts among potential and existing projects, and within individual North partner institutions; and to communicate the messages about the benefits gained by the North partner institutions as a countermeasure to the institutional constraints in engagement in activities that do not have immediately obvious academic or research returns on investment.

Relationship building

39. The experience of APPEAR Phase 1 is that project partnerships can seldom jump straight into project activities. Building working relationships between partners and overcoming knowledge gaps and false assumptions are a legitimate part of international projects and must be recognised as such if projects are to succeed and result in sustainable academic relationships.

Engaging with Austrian universities

40. In the APPEAR preparatory stages ADA worked hard to have a formal and informal dialogue with Austrian universities, though, at the time, the universities were not open to a wider debate on development relevance. Now that the programme is maturing, ADA and the programme manager should be able to ensure that the rationale for any structural or other changes are properly communicated and that all stakeholders can contribute their views.

Regional networking

41. The regional networking aspects of APPEAR, though limited in scope in Phase 1, seem to be very positive drivers of success. It will be important to ensure that proposed structures for Phase 2 of the programme facilitate regional networking, and that this aspect of partnership building is openly explored and encouraged.

Main recommendations

Managing by results

42. ADA should develop the basis for results-based management of the programme; this would require identification of a series of programme-level expected development results and indicators against which a detailed assessment of programme impact could be made.

Contract model of programme management

43. ADA should tender a new management contract for Phase 2 of APPEAR as a five-year contract plus a possible one- or two-year prolongation based on programme-level results, this is the minimum term of contract necessary to enable the possible extension of APPEAR partnership projects to a maximum five years rather than the current maximum of three years (see paragraph 53 below). The additional time is necessary to wind down the programme administratively.

Programme leadership and management

The Steering Committee

44. The current SC needs reorganisation and reconsideration of its role: the FMEIA and ADA should consider and decide on one of the following two options:
    a. The current SC is confirmed as a supervisory and steering committee, to assist ADA in its oversight of the programme. It should be chaired by ADA and have binding decision-making powers; its current membership should be changed to strengthen external expertise in international HE development programme management, including representation from South partner institutions.
    b. The current SC is replaced with an Advisory Board, chaired by FMEIA, with the role of providing strategic advice and guidance to ADA on the development, implementation and review of the programme (not the projects). In this role its TOR should be revised and its membership changed to include academic expertise in developing and implementing HE projects with South partners, and in the programme's specific thematic focus areas.

The Selection Board

45. In Phase 2, the SB should become an instrument of the programme management, convened and chaired by the contracted programme manager and not by ADA. ADA should change the TOR for the management contract accordingly.

ADA responsibilities

46. The FMEIA and ADA should ensure that the role of ADA is clearly defined in the TOR and Contract for Phase 2. ADA's role should broadly be to give leadership and strategic direction, and oversee the implementation of the APPEAR programme, and to ensure that the necessary resources are available to the programme manager throughout the implementation process.

Programme manager responsibilities

47. The contracted programme manager should remain responsible for managing and implementing the programme, monitoring and supervising all procedures and ensuring the successful imple-

mentation of all funded projects. ADA should ensure that the TOR of the Phase 2 contract defines these responsibilities in greater detail than the current TOR.

Programme structure and parameters

Components 1 and 2

48. Project partnership and scholarship components should no longer be separate. In Phase 2, all scholarships should be embedded in or overtly linked to funded partnership projects. We recommend that no free-standing scholarship component should be retained.

Preparatory and full proposals

49. In Phase 2, the preparatory project grants leading to the submission of full project proposals should be replaced by a two-step application process involving a competitive open call for partnership project concept notes or letters of intent; and a restricted call for fully-fledged project proposals issued only to those institutions whose concept notes pass the appropriate score threshold.
50. All those invited to submit a full proposal would be offered a preparatory grant to facilitate the preparation of the full proposal on the basis of a simple plan for how the funds will be spent. These funds should be paid on a non-returnable basis irrespective of whether the institutions actually complete and submit a full proposal.

Eligible countries

51. Consideration by FMEIA and ADA should be given to retaining all originally eligible countries in APPEAR, regardless of whether the country or region is any longer an ADC priority for other non-educational areas of Austrian cooperation.

Thematic constraints

52. Consideration by FMEIA and ADA should be given to extending the thematic focus of APPEAR to public health subjects (excluding medical doctor education) in which project partnerships and scholarships can build HE institutional and research capacity development.

Timescales

53. The maximum length for an APPEAR partnership project in Phase 2 should be five years.

Budgetary constraints

54. Allocation of up to 20% of project partnership budgets to non-eligible country partners in regional networks should be allowed.
55. Maximum overhead costs should be increased to 10% in Phase 2 projects.

Application and selection procedures

56. If Phase 2 programme structure and parameters are changed, the programme documentation will require revision and amendment by the new contractor to reflect these changes. These revisions should include a clear definition of all selection criteria and weightings, including ADC concerns such as achieving geographical balance in the programme, a balance in types of institutions or thematic focus.

Partner identification

57. ADA should consider including in Phase 2 an explicit focus on fostering partnerships with weaker, smaller and less well-resourced South partner institutions.

Communications and information

58. The current communications and information strategy should be completely revised and strengthened in Phase 2, by the new contractor, to include specific indicators and results against which its effective implementation can be assessed. Strategic priorities should include promoting the programme to the FHs, and to all publicly-funded HE and research institutions and to government ministries and departments responsible for HE in South priority countries.
59. ADA should include in the TOR of the programme management contract for Phase 2 two new specific tasks:
    - Set up and maintain a knowledge bank about the key players in HE international cooperation.
    - Facilitate 'match making' and contacts between Austrian and South HE institutions by setting up and maintaining an information resource on HE in the ADC South priority countries, including small, less well-known universities and contacts in these institutions.

Strengthening gender aspects

60. Consideration should be given by ADA to revising scholarship grant levels in Phase 2 to include an element to enable family members to accompany scholars, which could encourage more female candidates to apply for and take up scholarship opportunities.
61. ADA should also consider additional measures to support women to get scholarship grants, such as including maternity leave where necessary and staying longer in their own country as part of their research programme.

1 Background

1.1 The programme

1. The Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development (APPEAR), began in 2010 and is a five-year programme based on the Strategy for Higher Education and Scientific Cooperation of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) intended to implement the Strategy's defined principles, specifications and best standards.
2. APPEAR is a programme to strengthen institutional capacities in higher education, research and management in most of the key regions of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) through partnerships between academic and/or research institutions in these regions and Austrian academic institutions. The objectives are to improve the quality in teaching and research, to make the management and the administration of the institutions involved more effective and to strengthen scientific dialogue nationally and internationally.
3. APPEAR has two components, the first with a focus on academic partnerships, in which the programme funds well-designed, collaborative projects that respond to identified demands in the partner countries[2] and institutions. The second component, intended to be closely related to the academic partnerships, supports students and academics with grants for Master and PhD programmes in Austria.
4. APPEAR is funded by ADA and the programme is managed by a consortium of the Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research (OeAD) and the Austrian Latin America Institute (LAI).

1.2 Origins of the programme

5. In 2007 ADA commissioned an evaluation of the ADC education sector work, with an Annex specifically on the current scholarship schemes funded by ADC[3]. This Annex noted that support to education was dominated by

   "Historically grown scholarship programmes implemented in Austria without a visible overall conceptual framework and policy guideline, and without a sufficiently convincing justification rooted in international and national reference frameworks for spending more than two thirds of the overall budget allocation for educational projects."

6. The report recommended that Austria should take a policy decision about whether education should be "a strategic pillar of ADC", and if it was to be, which sub-sector in education would have priority. It further recommended that, with this priority in focus, Austria should provide a sustainable budget for achieving an impact in selected regions, and initiate for the selected educational sub-sector "a process to develop the respective concepts and approaches aligned with international obligations, good practices and professional standards." It noted that

   "To achieve this, Austria will have to make a drastic reduction in its investment for scholarship programmes implemented in Austria".

7. The ADA consequently phased out the scholarship schemes, in consultation with the key organisations, and prepared a strategy for higher education (HE), the priority sub-sector of education selected for ADC support.

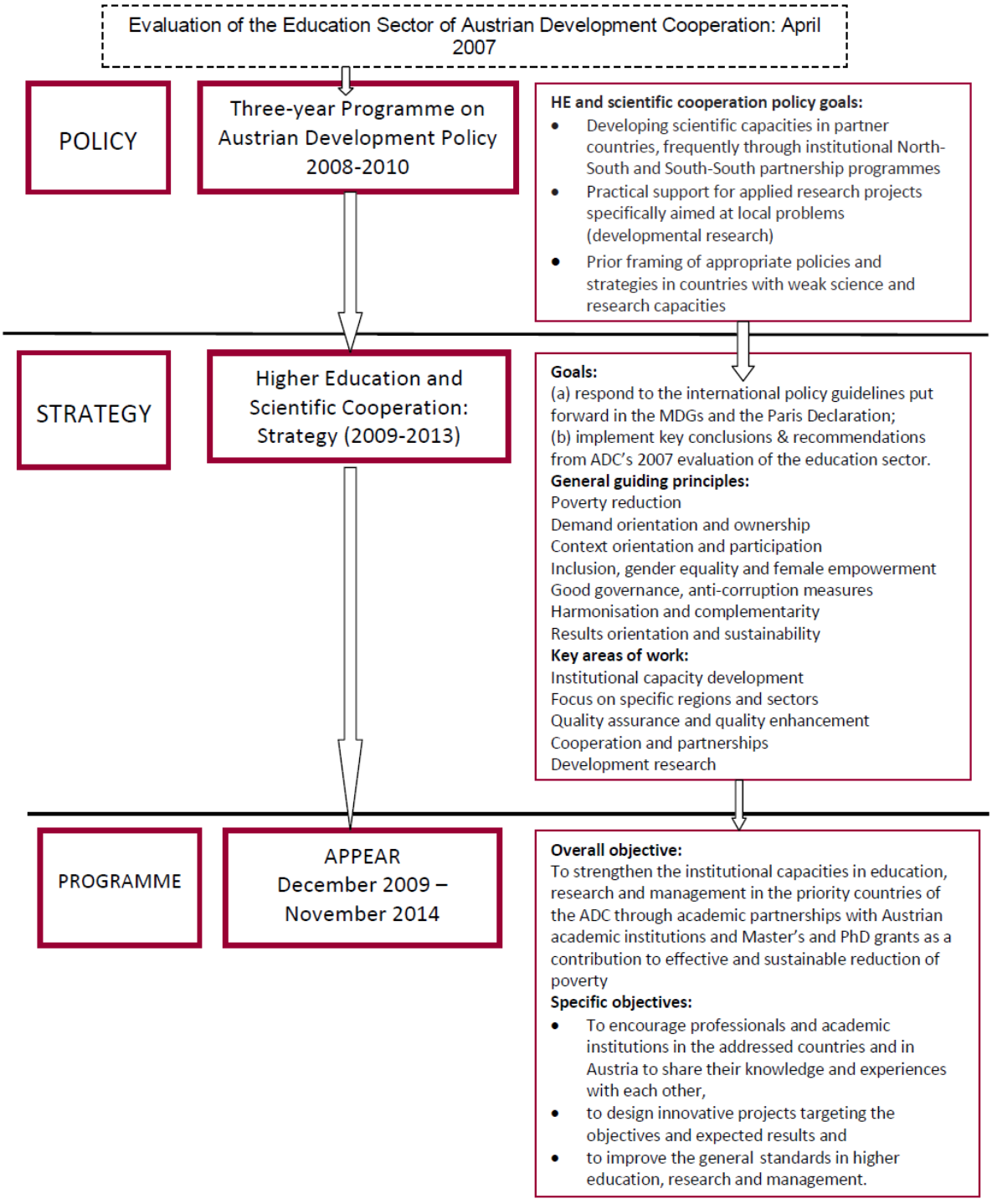
[2] Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Bhutan, Nepal and the Palestinian Territories

[3] Evaluation of the Education Sector of Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with South-East Europe. GZ 2337-00-2005/1-PP/2005 Final Report: ÖSB Consulting GmbH / L&R Sozialforschung OEG, in cooperation with KEK-CDC Consultants. Annex 5:Review of Austrian Scholarship Programmes. Vienna, 2007

1.3 Programme intervention logic

8. Figure 1 summarises the intervention logic.

Figure 1: Programme level intervention logic



2 Introduction

9. The ADA commissioned Education for Change Ltd to conduct a mid-term evaluation of APPEAR to assess the first phase of the APPEAR programme in September 2012.

2.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

10. The mid-term evaluation assesses APPEAR Phase 1 (to date) according to the ADA Strategy Higher Education and Scientific Cooperation (henceforward the HE Strategy), the terms of reference (TOR) of the programme management contract tender and the programme documents (the contracting and programme implementation documents).
11. The evaluation formulates conclusions based on its findings, lessons learned and recommendations concerning the second programme phase.
12. The evaluation includes a detailed analysis of the:

    a) relevance of the entire programme

    b) strengths and weakness of the programme structure and programme implementation

    c) logframe in the programme management contract
13. The evaluation assesses only the programme level itself (meta and macro levels) and not the granted projects, and considers the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria for evaluating development assistance interventions with the focus on the relevance and effectiveness criteria, rather than sustainability and impact.
14. The TOR for the evaluation are appended as Annex 1.

3 Methods

3.1 Evaluation framework

15. This mid-term evaluation has been based on an evaluation framework developed in the Inception stage as required by ADA, indicating data and evidence sources, etc. The framework was used to develop checklists of question areas and questions for different stakeholders and was included in the Inception Report.

3.2 Research methods

3.2.1 Document review and analysis

16. Document review and analysis focused on programme policy, strategy and implementation procedures. Documents relating to the current APPEAR project portfolio (proposals, plans, monitoring data or reports etc.) were also sampled to contribute towards evidence of programme effectiveness and the efficacy of procedures in Phase 1. We requested OeAD/LAI to select a random sample of four or five full project proposals from each of the three Calls, including both approved and rejected proposals. We requested the full documentation for each one, including the peer reviews. In total we reviewed documentation for 16 proposals.

3.2.2 Consultation with stakeholders

In Austria

17. Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with the majority of informants in stakeholder organisations in Austria identified by ADA (21 interviews). Where this proved impossible, discussions were held by telephone (nine interviews).

In other countries

18. One South project coordinator visiting Austria at the time was interviewed. Telephone interviews with three other South project coordinators, and one Steering Committee (SC) member located in other countries were conducted: consultation with two other South project coordinators was followed up through email correspondence.
19. A full list of those contacted and consulted is appended as Annex 2.

3.2.3 Online surveys

20. Short online surveys (using SurveyMonkey) were prepared and distributed to a number of different stakeholder groups:
    - APPEAR peer reviewers (49 responses from an OeAD/LAI distribution list of 140)
    - Vice-rectors of Austrian universities (four responses: the survey was distributed by a representative of Universities Austria (UNIKO), so the number invited to complete the survey is unknown)
    - Vice-rectors of Fachhochschulen (FH) (one response: the survey was distributed by a representative of the Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, so the number invited to complete the survey is unknown)
    - ADA coordinators (four responses from an ADA list of six)
21. These survey questionnaires and the summary results of the peer reviewers' survey are reproduced in Annex 3.

3.3 Constraints on the evaluation

22. There were no significant constraints on the evaluation research: some of those contacted for interviews did not respond, despite repeated email requests (for example, two members of the

Selection Board (SB) and one SC member did not respond at all). We were unable to speak directly to any vice-rectors of universities; the meeting requested through UNIKO was simply too short notice for any vice-rector to attend.

23. In our opinion, however, these omissions did not have any substantive influence on the findings of the evaluation.

3.4 This report

24. This final report provides a detailed summary of evaluation findings, related to the questions asked in the TOR for the evaluation (Section 4). Section 5 summarises the conclusions arising from the findings, followed by lessons learned (section 6) and recommendations (section 7).

3.4.1 Note on terminology

Contractor and contractee

25. In English usage the term 'contractor' refers to a person or business that provides goods or services to another entity under terms specified in a contract, meaning OeAD/LAI in the case of APPEAR. ADA would be called the 'contractee' as the project owner, client or principal that enters into a contract with a contractor and receives specified goods or services under the terms of the contract. Where necessary we have used these terms to avoid confusion.

Leadership and management

26. In our findings and conclusions about the roles and responsibilities for management, oversight and supervision of the APPEAR programme we recognise that the terminology related to different levels and modes of management is confusing. We have therefore focused, for clarity, on the two concepts of 'leadership' and 'management'.
27. In Annex 4, we append a diagrammatic model of leadership and management, and the areas where they may overlap, which we feel is appropriate to the description of roles and responsibilities of, in particular, ADA and the managing consortium of APPEAR. The definitions of the various functions and roles of leaders and managers in this diagram represent a useful checklist of terms, which we have used consistently throughout this report when discussing these issues.

4 Evaluation findings

4.1 Relevance

4.1.1 Alignment of the programme with international approaches to development cooperation

1) Is the programme in accordance with international strategies and approaches (e.g. Paris Declaration, Accra Convention, MDGs) in relation to its goals, principles, structure and design?

28. In approach and design APPEAR is informed by several key policy and evaluative documents, all of which are consistent with the broad international consensus on approaches to international development cooperation as defined in, for example, the MDGs, the Paris Declaration etc.

Specific international approaches

The MDGs and poverty alleviation

29. APPEAR was based on the assumption, articulated in the ADC three –year policy 2008-2010[4] and the ADC HE Strategy[5], that stronger scientific capabilities make a major contribution to attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to sustainable development in the partner countries. APPEAR embodies the ADC development goals of developing scientific capacities in partner countries through institutional North-South and South-South partnership programmes and provides practical support for applied research projects specifically aimed at local problems.
30. These goals directly address the development of national capacity in partner countries to implement domestic policies, strategies and programmes aimed at reducing poverty and achieving the MDGs.

Ownership

31. The overall objective of the APPEAR programme is to strengthen institutional capacities in education, research and management through academic partnerships and scholarships. This aligns well with the Paris Declaration, which commits donor countries to strengthen partner countries' capacity to exercise effective leadership over their development strategies and coordinate development actions.
32. APPEAR's basic principles accord well with the concept of ownership as defined in the Paris Declaration, particularly the demand-driven approach of the programme, in which emphasis is placed upon demand defined by the partners in the South, and the participatory approach to education and research.

Alignment with country strategies

33. APPEAR in principle is intended to fund projects that respond to the needs and demands in Southern countries. The programme makes explicit the requirement in proposals for funding to align activities and expected results to national and sectoral development policies and strategies.

[4] Three-year programme on Austrian Development Policy 2008-2010. Revised version 2008. Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. P 67

[5] Higher education and scientific cooperation: strategy. Austrian Development Cooperation, 2009.

Harmonisation of donor actions

34. APPEAR, in its principles and design, is less-well aligned to the Paris Declaration commitment by donors to harmonise their action plans with other development partners and seek complementarity of actions within specific areas.
35. There is little coordination of activity, internationally, regionally or at country level, among OECD development partners in HE and research (unlike in basic education). APPEAR makes only minimal reference to the need to establish what other development activities may be relevant to partnership funding.

Managing for results

36. In the Paris Declaration, managing for results means managing and implementing aid in a way that focuses on the desired results and uses information to improve decision making. There are no expected results identified at the programme level against which the management and implementation of APPEAR as a programme can be assessed. Only the expected results for projects are identified, under three categories - institutional, educational and scientific - and impact on development.
37. This means that the results of the APPEAR programme as a whole are only expressed and measured in terms of programme outputs (e.g. numbers of proposals processed, accepted, rejected; number of partner institutions involved, and levels of funding etc.), rather than real development outcomes.

Mutual accountability

38. The programme's emphasis on participatory approaches to proposal writing and to project implementation aligns well with the Paris Declaration commitment for donors and partners to be jointly accountable for results.

External factors limiting alignment

General and shared understanding of the key issues among stakeholders

39. The APPEAR programme has largely replaced a diverse number of scholarship schemes funded in part from the Austrian development budget. During the course of 2008-10 this change represented a shift from a mainly academic focus (scholarships awarded on the basis of academic suitability of study and research proposals and individual ability) to a mainly development focus (an academic programme but driven by and serving the principles of ADC first and foremost).
40. Development research[6] is not widespread within Austrian HE and evidence from informants on the APPEAR SB, UNIKO and from project proposal peer reviewers suggests that the lack of a general and shared understanding of development issues and current international approaches constrained stakeholders in making this paradigm shift from a primarily academic to a development focus.

[6] "research *on* development … research *for* development… and development policy research." ADC HE Strategy, p. 11

4.1.2 Alignment with the Higher Education Strategy

2.) Have the principles of the strategy for Higher Education and Scientific Cooperation of the Austrian Development Cooperation been adequately translated in the design and implementation of the programme?

41. The HE Strategy was written by ADA. ADA staff also conceptualised the Programme as a major response to the principles of the Strategy, though not the only one: all running and future projects or programmes in HE have to be in accordance with the Strategy.
42. This close relationship between HE Strategy and Programme is evident in the detailed TOR prepared by ADA for the tender to appoint a Contractor to manage the programme and which lay out most of the programme requirements and structure. Thus alignment with the main HE strategic principles in the design of the programme was assured and is broadly evident.
43. In particular the following principles have been translated explicitly and unambiguously into the programme documents for Component 1 (the Guidelines for Applicants and partnership application form):
    - poverty reduction
    - demand orientation and ownership
    - context orientation and participation
    - inclusion, gender equality and female empowerment
    - results orientation and sustainability
44. These principles are represented in the selection and scoring matrix for full project proposals for Component 1 and, where relevant, PhD grant proposals in Component 2, in the APPEAR Guidelines for Applicants.
45. Peer reviewers of APPEAR project proposals surveyed for this evaluation identified significant weaknesses from applicants in the areas of demand-driven approaches, development relevance, gender integration and results orientation and sustainability (see Figure 2 below). Several project coordinators in scientific (rather than social science) areas acknowledged that integration of gender aspects into their proposals had been the most challenging area, mainly because of difficulties of interpretation of what that might mean in practice and lack of complete understanding of the local social and cultural context for the project.
46. The HE Strategy principle of 'good governance (anti-corruption measures)' is less explicit in the programme documents though it is implicit in the project management, budgeting and accounting procedures outlined in the APPEAR Guidelines for Applicants.
47. 'Harmonisation and complementarity' as a principle is weakly represented in the programme documents: the APPEAR Guidelines put emphasis on the innovative nature of proposed partnership projects, and only suggest 'are there any links to ongoing development activities?' as one of the issues that applicants should consider in preparing proposals.
48. Out of a sample of 16 project proposals only a handful make reference to any other relevant 'experience with South-North / South-South cooperation' and applicants are not asked specifically to state whether or not the South partner institution has or has had complementary academic or capacity development collaboration with other donors and development partners in relevant fields.

4.1.3 Contribution to visibility of development related issues

3.) What is the pro-

gramme's contribution to the visibility of development related issues, research and teaching within the Austrian academic /scientific public?

49. As noted in the HE Strategy, Austrian academic institutions do not have explicit development-related goals. The requirements of increasingly results-based management in academic institutions also militate against doing development activities in which the academic or research gain for the Austrian institution may not be clear. The previous history of disparate scholarship schemes did not embed development know-how and approaches within university departments.
50. The move towards implementing the HE Strategy through APPEAR was controversial among the Austrian universities. Although ADA had several formal and informal meetings with university vice-rectors and other management staff to introduce the new developmental and programmatic approach, it seems there was limited discussion or debate within the academic community about the development-related issues underpinning APPEAR.
51. Since the setting up of APPEAR, the managing consortium OeAD/LAI has been active in promoting it and using it to raise awareness and discussion about the development issues it embodies, particularly within HE but also targeting the informed public through radio pieces and printed materials (see also 4.2.14). According to a representative of UNIKO, university managers initially struggled to understand the unfamiliar development relevance aspects of APPEAR, but in their view OeAD/LAI has been effective in promoting, explaining and supporting their growing understanding. One SC member also commented:

    "A lot of effort has been done to advertise the programme in Austria. I was impressed by the turn up during the water week film organized by the APPEAR team… In my days as a student (in the 90s & early 2000s) it was very hard for Austrians to be interested in issues to do with developing countries."

52. For some of those academics who have engaged in Phase 1 of the programme through the preparation and submission of one or more of the 90+ project proposals submitted for funding, or through being part of an implementation team in an accepted project, the learning curve about development-related issues has been quite steep, according to discussions with Austrian project coordinators. The knowledge and experience gained is generally regarded as valuable, positioning them and their institutions well to continue their engagement with APPEAR.
53. The managing consortium and each contracted project partnership are under contractual obligations to promote and acknowledge the funding contribution of ADC in all project outputs, which may have a cumulative but so far not quantified impact on the visibility of development–related issues.
54. The issue of how success in this area would be measured was raised in SC discussions in the 2011 meeting:

    "One important objective of appear within Austria is to promote development research and make developmental issues known to universities and institutions in Austria, i.e. to make the project public through events, round tables and other public events and discussions and share the experience. The indicators for measuring success are not yet defined. A few well defined indicators should be established."[7]

    Such indicators have not as yet been identified (see also 4.2.14).

[7] Resolution-Minutes: Meeting of the appear Steering Committee May 2011

4.1.4 Relevance to national development strategies

4.) Does the programme facilitate projects which are in accordance with national development and education strategies of the southern partner countries?

55. In design and structure APPEAR has sufficient built-in flexibility, including ADC's broad thematic focus, to facilitate projects in accordance with aspects of most national development and HE strategies (where the latter exist). If a country's national thematic strategic focus is different from that of ADC, the programme design and structure makes it nonetheless relatively easy, particularly for applied science institutions, to establish appropriate academic links and align with other aspects of national poverty reduction strategies, such as strengthening specific public services through capacity development in education and training institutions.
56. APPEAR partnerships do not have to conform to the relevant ADC country strategy thematic priorities (which may be narrower in focus than national government strategies). However, a stronger linkage between APPEAR projects and ADC country strategies would apparently find favour with some ADA staff and ADA coordinators.
57. ADA coordinators input to the programme in this area is important to ensure alignment with national strategies. Under-resourcing in ADA coordination offices can mean that they are not able always to respond as fully as they would wish.

    "Commenting [on] the applications is time consuming and usually the office has not the capacities to assign one person for APPEAR (higher education)." Comment from ADA coordinator.

4.1.5 South partners' view of relevance to poverty reduction

5.) Is there, in the view of the southern project partners, a reciprocal relationship between research / teaching and poverty reduction?

58. Governments in the South increasingly recognise the important link between a strong HE and research sector and poverty reduction and make this link explicit through national sector strategies and investment priorities (e.g. Ethiopia). However, the causal chain can be long between making capacity development inputs to teaching and research and effects in terms of poverty reduction or alleviation. The theory is well known among academics working in, for example, rural development, agriculture and social sector disciplines, and some South partners are very articulate about ways to link social research to national poverty reduction strategies through public finance mechanisms. It is more difficult to make direct relationships like this in pure science research.
59. Personal experience convinces some that the relationship is real; for example, the ENERGY project partnership in Nepal is addressing the development of hydropower energy systems' planning capacity in a country where power cuts are frequent and detrimental to service delivery and entrepreneurial activities that underpin poverty alleviation. In other projects the research or capacity development activities involve citizen beneficiaries (e.g. DEPARTIR in Nicaragua) so the causal chain is much shorter.

4.2 Effectiveness

4.2.1 Efficient and effective programme implementation

6.) Does the programme design (procedures and instruments) enable an efficient and effective programme implementation?

Finance, human resource and other key inputs

Finance

60. The total budget for APPEAR 2009-2014 is €10,310,000, two thirds of which was intended for funding preparatory and full partnership projects, and including costs allocated to the management consortium contract for the same period totalling €1,305,755[8].

61. In the three Calls for APPEAR proposals in Phase 1 of the programme, a total of €4.9 million had been allocated to 17 successful partnership projects and €308,146 to 24 preparatory projects[9]. The balance of the available funds has been allocated to Component 2 (including continuation funding for 67 scholars from the North-South-Dialogue-Scholarship Programme), with the exception of approximately €600,000 from the Phase 1 budget that remains unallocated after all three Calls.

Human resources

62. The Education and Science Adviser at ADA has been heavily involved in planning and problem solving for APPEAR in Phase 1; this is the largest education programme in ADC and this has been a pilot phase. Other ADA staff members have also contributed to the conception and development of the programme.

63. The managing consortium OeAD/LAI initially committed a team of nine personnel to the design, development and management of APPEAR, not all full-time, therefore the equivalent of approximately 7-7.5 full-time members of staff. The work was very much 'front-loaded' as the consortium designed and launched the programme in the first year with all documentation and promotional materials ready.

64. It is clear from discussions with consortium staff and other project stakeholders that each Call is labour intensive for OeAD/LAI, for example in preparation, receipt and checking of papers, support to potential partnership enquiries, providing secretariat services for the SB etc.

65. The consortium has identified a list of around 250 peer reviewers to review full project proposals, of whom 160 agreed to review proposals during Phase 1. Of the 49 reviewers responding to our survey, 80% had only reviewed one APPEAR proposal and 20% only two proposals in Phase 1. APPEAR also calls upon a SB of seven members external to the consortium and a SC, also of seven people.

Time

66. The final critical input to APPEAR is time. Apparently for administrative reasons, rather than other programmatic considerations, ADA set the Phase 1 contract for three years (1 December 2009-30 November 2012) plus a two-year extension (the maximum allowable).

[8] Source: Finanzieller Teil des Angebots „NORD-SÜD-HOCHSCHULKOOPERATION PROGRAMM 2009 - 2014" GZ 0894-00/2009/1-PP/2009 Last and Best Offer (LBO), September 2009. OeAD

[9] Source: APPEAR facts and figures by Julia Lichtkoppler-Moser. PowerPoint presentation

67. This contract model has had a number of consequences, constraining some elements of programme implementation. The few months of 2010 were taken up with designing and launching the programme:

    "For the 1st Call time schedule was very tight. The programme started in January 2010. In the first 3 months the programme design and all the information and application material was developed. The kick-off event and the opening of the 1st Call took place at end of March 2010."[10]

68. OeAD/LAI could not have achieved this in a shorter timescale. Projects accepted in the 1st Call effectively got underway in late 2010 or early 2011.The 2nd Call followed speedily in January 2011 and the 3rd and final Call in December 2011.

69. In the 3rd Call no preparatory project proposals were invited as there would be no further calls for full proposal submissions in Phase 1. Because of the 2014 official end of the contract with the managing consortium, only two-year project proposals could be accepted (not the previous maximum three years).

70. No scholarship applications were publicly invited in the 3rd Call since any contracts signed by OeAD/LAI with scholars taking up their two- or three-year studies would be likely to overrun the period of their ADA contract and no further extensions to this contract are allowable. However, an 'extraordinary' closed call for applications was run among project partner institutions, resulting in awarded scholarships associated with the funded projects.

Key outputs from Phase 1 of the programme

71. Table 1 shows the number of scholarship applications received and selected from the 1st, 2nd and final 'extraordinary' Call for applications in Phase 1. Sixty-three scholarships were funded from a total of 103 formally correct applications.

Table 1: Summary of scholarship applications in APPEAR Phase 1[11]

	PhD	Of which female applicants	Masters	Of which female applicants	Total
Submissions	98	20	57	11	155
Formally correct	64	14	39	7	103
Selected (female applicants)	**42**	**9**	**21**	**3**	**63 (12)**

72. A total of 66 preparatory partnership proposals were submitted under the 1st and 2nd Calls, of which 24 were accepted for funding and nine of these proposals resulted in full project proposals that were accepted for funding.

73. A total of 90 partnership project proposals were received over the three Calls in Phase 1 from 24 Austrian academic and research institutions, of which 17 were accepted for funding.

74.

75. Table 2 shows a summary of the countries of submitting South partners.

[10] Resolution-Minutes: Meeting of the appear Steering Committee May 2011

[11] Source: data provided by OeAD/LAI

Table 2: Country spread of South partners in submitted proposals Phase 1[12]

Partner Countries	Proposals	Formally correct
Burkina Faso	5	4
Cape Verde	1	1
Ethiopia	16	16
Ethiopia & Uganda	1	1
Kenya	5	4
Kenya & Ethiopia	4	4
Mozambique	8	3
Mozambique & South Africa	1	0
Mozambique & Uganda	1	1
Senegal	0	0
Uganda	8	7
Uganda & Kenya	3	2
Uganda & Kenya & Tanzania & Rwanda	1	1
El Salvador	1	1
El Salvador & Nicaragua	2	2
Guatemala	2	1
Nicaragua	6	6
Nicaragua & Guatemala	1	1
Nicaragua & Guatemala & El Salvador	3	2
Nicaragua & Peru	1	1
Bhutan	3	3
Bhutan & Nepal	2	2
Nepal	7	5
Palestinian Territories	6	5
Palestinian Territories & Jordan	1	1
not eligible	1	0
Total	90	74

Effectiveness

Application

76. The guidelines, documentation and procedures for APPEAR are widely acknowledged by stakeholders in Austria and among South partners to be clear, straightforward and easy to follow in the preparation of partnership project proposals. The only possible exception to this is the budgetary requirements in the application procedure, which some project coordinators (North and South) found onerous while others had no difficulties with it. The difference seems to depend upon the individual's level of experience in preparing project proposals, particularly for international donor organisations.

77. Two aspects of budget preparation were commented on in particular:

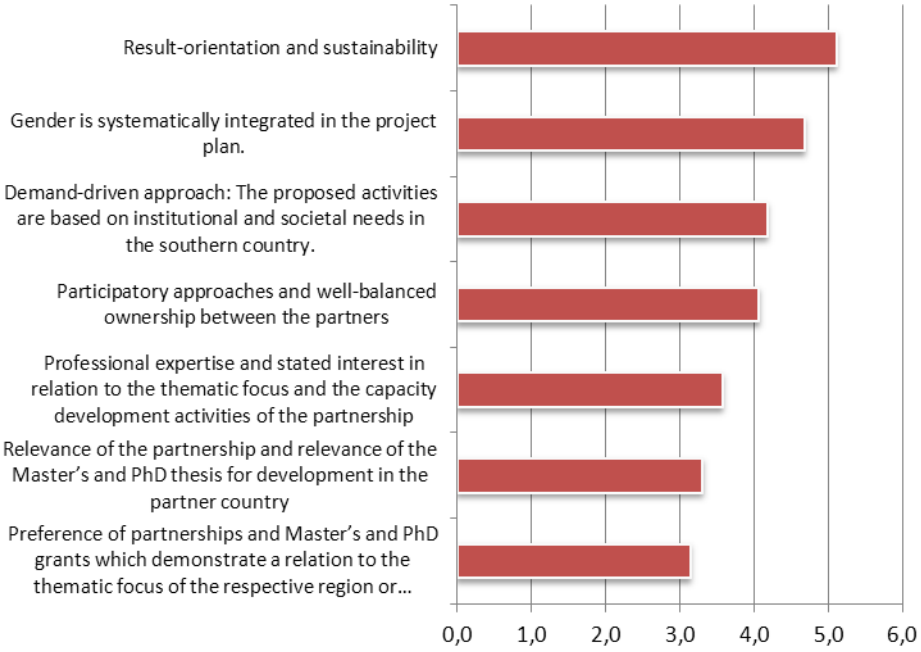
- The requirement for at least 50% of funding overall to the South partner was generally praised as a principle, but some partners found it difficult to achieve this in budget estimates that reflected the work the project wished to do (for example, with salaries much higher in the North it could prove difficult to build in sufficient inputs from Austrian academic staff and remain under the 50% limit).
- The maximum annual spend limitation (restricting the maximum spend in a project budget to € 90,000 for two partners or €130,000 for three partners or more) was seen by two or three project coordinators as unhelpful. They

[12] Source: APPEAR facts and figures by Julia Lichtkoppler-Moser. PowerPoint presentation

had felt obliged to submit a budget with the project cost estimates equally divided between the maximum three years of the project to ensure that they could request the maximum grant. They knew that in reality they were unlikely to be able to spend equal amounts in each year and yet if their budget reflected reality they felt they would not get the total budget allowable. In implementation, we understand, it is possible for partnerships to negotiate with the OeAD/LAI to move funds between project years to reflect more closely the reality of what happens on the ground, but not all project coordinators we spoke to were aware of this and several felt constrained by and under pressure from trying to stick to an approved project budget that set unrealistic spending targets.

78. Peer reviewers responding to our survey were asked to score the applicants' responses in the application form to the required areas as described in the Guidelines for Reviewers according to where they found the greatest weaknesses in the project proposals they have reviewed. The mean scores are shown in Figure 2 and show that establishing 'results-orientation' and 'sustainability' for the project, integrating gender and demonstrating a 'demand-driven approach' to project conception are the three areas of greatest weakness overall.

Figure 2: Mean scores from peer reviewers for areas of greatest weakness in project proposals



Selection

79. Some SB members voiced the opinion that the selection process for both preparatory and full project proposals is too lengthy, laborious and time-consuming. Nevertheless, the procedures were evidently effective enough for the SB to approve 24 preparatory projects and 17 full projects for funding in Phase 1, and all of the latter are being implemented.

80. The processing of applications by the managing consortium – checking that applications are formally correct, sending out to peer review, assembling papers for the SB, answering queries, etc. – is unavoidably labour-intensive and takes considerable time.

81. Peer review currently takes up one or more months in the selection period. OeAD/LAI commented that it may take potential peer reviewers two to three weeks even to respond to requests to review. Peer reviewers are given one month to review one or two APPEAR applications, and a project proposal may require a 3rd peer reviewer to take another month to review if the scores of the first two are very different. Of the 49 peer reviewers responding to our survey, 47% said that they complete the whole review process within one or two days, and 39% said they can achieve it in up to three days. When asked how they work on reviewing proposals – whether they normally try to do the review and scoring as one continuous task or work on it over a period of time, returning to the work on separate occasions – the responding reviewers were split 48%:53% between these two options, meaning slightly more than half of them spread those one to three days over a longer elapsed period. About a third (29%) of responding reviewers said, given their typical workload, they would need one to two weeks from the date of receipt of the APPEAR project proposal to return a completed review; 25% said they would need two to three weeks.
82. Currently, the managing consortium sends a one-sheet summary for every scholarship application to the SB, whether the application is related to a Component 1 project or not. OeAD/LAI also ask for the designated supervisor's evaluation of the application if it is for a PhD.

Implementation

83. Many partnership projects have encountered delays getting started on implementation owing to, for example:
    - contractual issues with South partner institutions
    - establishing common and full understanding of the financial reporting requirements
    - lack of funds in South partner institutions to begin project work: most project grant agreements include a payment schedule paying the first project payment 40 days after the 'effective date' (start of implementation) plus return of contract to OeAD/LAI. If delays in the latter are also incurred this can mean a relatively long delay in payments reaching partners
84. The reporting procedures for funded partnership projects were widely considered by project coordinators as reasonable and acceptable. They also commented positively on the responsiveness and support of the managing consortium when any queries arise in implementation. Two project coordinators also commented favourably on the flexibility shown in relation to allowing changes and revision to original project plans and budgets if these are underpinned by sound arguments.
85. Evidently some project coordinators, particularly though not exclusively in the South, struggle with the financial reporting requirements for their project, while others find them perfectly straightforward: the differences seem to be associated with the individual's own experience of managing projects, the supportiveness and experience of the institution's finance and administrative staff, and the system of accounting and financial reporting adopted by the partner institution for both operational and project work.
86. Some coordinators of projects arising from preparatory projects felt that the accounting and financial reporting requirements for preparatory projects are

too heavy for such relatively small sums of money.

87. On the issue of APPEAR scholarships, several commentators noted a need for urgent action to provide additional funds to enable family members to accompany scholars. Young PhD scholars often have to leave their family for three years because the scholarship does not support family members. This seriously militates against take-up of scholarships by female applicants.

Quality of results

88. High quality standards have been applied to applications for partnership funding throughout the first phase. While 'quality' can be broadly interpreted to cover the presentational and content-related quality of the whole proposal, according to several SB members, ADA in particular stressed the need for high academic quality as well as developmental relevance in projects. One SB member commented that the Board was told by ADA in the first meeting that they were under no pressure to spend the funds available for each Call, and that high quality standards should take precedence: five full projects were approved in the 1st Call; six projects in the 2nd and six in the 3rd.

89. The quality of the peer review process was also a substantial factor in determining quality of programme results: for example, in the 3rd Call, five further project proposals had been scored between 75 and 80 (the required level to be considered for funding) by peer reviewers but were nonetheless all rejected by the SB[13]. Two SB members felt (in retrospect) that it would have been possible to identify other good projects to fund, based on peer reviews. On the other hand, ADA and one SB member noted that it is very difficult to judge the peer reports as the quality of the reports differed from reviewer to reviewer. The ADA Education and Science Adviser (chair of the SB) noted that there was a lot of discussion at SB meetings about the peer reviewers' scoring: for example the scoring was often too high, with one peer reviewer giving 95 points to a proposal while also including a lot of criticism in their review; and sometimes the reviews were very short, without any substantial comment on important criteria like development aspects.

4.2.2 Intermediate programme results

7.) Has the programme already achieved intermediate results as defined in the logframe?

90. The logical framework or logframe underpinning the contract between ADA and the managing consortium defines seven results for Component 1 of the programme. Results 1 – 6 have been comprehensively achieved. Result 7 (Monitoring, evaluation and internal quality assurance) has, to date, been partially achieved and work continues in this area as projects funded under Phase 1 will implement until 2014.

4.2.3 Programme execution by contracted consortium

8.) Does the chosen way of ADA for the programme execution (externally, by the selected consortia) assure an effective implementation

91. Since 2008, ADA, in common with other government-funded agencies, has been under considerable pressure to make savings in response to the Government's Budget Framework for the period[14]. Recruitment of new staff into ADA to provide the appropriate capacity to design, launch and manage the APPEAR programme was, under this Framework, out of the question. ADA was therefore left with no alternative but to contract an external organisation to undertake

[13] Source: Übersichtsliste – Projekte 9/10/12 from OeAD/LAI
[14] ADC Three-year programme 2008-2010 p 9

of the programme?

this work.

92. The TOR developed by ADA for the tender to appoint a managing consortium outlined the shape of the APPEAR programme in considerable detail. The two components of APPEAR – new partnership projects and a continued scholarship fund - were conceived by ADA as a mechanism to enable the transition from pre-existing ADC-funded scholarship schemes to a development programme approach. Thus the basic structure of the APPEAR programme was set by ADA with two-thirds of available funds going to Component 1 (partnerships) and the length of programme management contract set at a total of three years plus two years' prolongation.
93. The managing consortium that was awarded the contract is made up of two organisations that were running one or more of the pre-existing scholarship schemes. The consortium therefore had well-established and close links with academic institutions in Austria and in countries in the South as well as considerable development experience (in particular, OeAD through its management of the Commission for Development Studies (KEF)). The consortium had the appropriate capacity to build quickly on ADA's TOR and, in consultation with ADA, design, launch and implement an effective programme, differing only in minor details from ADA's original conception.

4.2.4 Adherence to basic principles in selection process

9.) Are the five basic principles of the programme considered in the selection process of the projects?

94. The five basic principles of the APPEAR programme are summarised in the Guidelines for Applicants as:
    - participatory approach
    - a concept of culturally open-minded knowledge
    - practically- and empirically-oriented approach
    - gender sensitivity
    - 'bottom-up' and demand-driven approach
95. The Guidelines for Applicants make it reasonably clear how the five basic principles can be demonstrated in a number of ways within the project proposal and embedded into the project conception, design and partnership itself. The principles are embedded in the descriptions of the three levels of expected results from projects, and in the descriptions of what is required from applicants under the five different dimensions of the APPEAR partnership project application.
96. However, where the main aim of the proposed project is to build capacity through course delivery or curriculum development rather than research, the principle of 'practically- and empirically-oriented approach' may legitimately be overlooked by applicants. Furthermore, 'culturally open-minded knowledge' can be interpreted in a number of different ways depending on one's perspective (for example, by North and South partners), and in our consultations was understood differently by different stakeholders in the selection process.
97. In addition to adherence to the principles, applicants are also told that the content of the proposals must demonstrate:
    1) Demand-driven approach: the proposed activities are based on institutional and societal needs in the South country.
    2) Relevance of the partnership and relevance of the Master's and PhD thesis for development in the partner country, specifically in relation to the thematic focus of the programme.

3) Preference for partnerships and Master's and PhD grants that demonstrate a relation to the thematic focus of the respective region or country of the ADC.
4) Gender is systematically integrated in the project plan.
5) Professional expertise and stated interest in relation to the thematic focus and the capacity development activities of the partnership.
6) Participatory approaches and well-balanced ownership between the partners.
7) Results-orientation and sustainability.[15]

98. While there is a relationship between these statements and the five basic principles, some things are missing: 'concept of culturally open-minded knowledge' cannot be read into any of these statements and 'practically- and empirically-oriented approach' is simply omitted.

99. As a matter of course, no doubt, every SB member is familiar with the five basic principles behind the programme, but they are not referred to in the TOR for the SB; nor are the principles directly referred to as basic principles in the Guidelines for Reviewers. Instead, the peer reviewers are told to focus on assessing coherence of the application with the seven content statements shown above.

4.2.5 Selection criteria and South partners

10.) Do the selection criteria consider the needs and demands of the southern partners?

100. The selection criteria as described and elaborated in the Guidelines for Applicants are deemed by those South project coordinators interviewed to be a model of clarity that meet the elements they would like to see in a programme of this kind very well. Favourable aspects picked out by interviewees include:

- the 50% of funding to go to the South partner
- the emphasis on a participatory approach to project activities
- the emphasis on identifying and involving research beneficiaries in project plans

101. One South project coordinator noted that when he read the APPEAR call documentation he realised that the programme requirements fitted perfectly with a long-running piece of research development at his university. As noted in 4.1.1 above, the criteria also match broad international development approaches, with which most experienced South partners are broadly familiar. Concepts such as 'participatory approach' and 'ownership' are now common currency within the international development project funding world, used by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and governments alike. So, broadly speaking, the selection criteria as laid out in the Guidelines reflect what South partners now expect in international cooperation.

4.2.6 Transparent selection processes

11.) To which extent is the project selection for all relevant stakeholders (e.g. applicants, Selection Board, Steering Committee and other

102. Although, as ADA noted, the whole application and selection process should be adequately covered in the Guidelines for Applicants, the TOR for the SB, the information on the website and the information supplied by the APPEAR team in the managing consortium in response to enquiries, there has been some lack of trust in the process voiced by applicants, perhaps as a legacy of the transition from diverse scholarship schemes to the programmatic approach. OeAD/LAI reported to the SC in

[15] APPEAR Guidelines for Reviewers p 1, Guidelines for Applicants 3rd Call p 6

interested institutions and individuals) transparent, unprejudiced and in accordance with the "Guidelines for Applicants"?

2012 that negative feedback came mainly from some of the rejected applicants who complained that the project selection was not transparent.

The partnership and preparatory projects

The Guide for Applicants

103. As described in the Guidelines for Applicants, the selection process for partnership projects seems to be transparent and open. Emphasis is placed on the importance, indeed primacy, of the peer reviews by independent experts. The majority of these experts bring to the review exercise both thematic or subject knowledge and knowledge or experience of the geographical region or specific country (according to 86% of those peer reviewers responding to our survey). The peer reviewers are required to comment on the ways in which the application has addressed the seven 'required areas' for content (see 4.2.4), and assign scores to applications according to the five main selection criteria, described for applicants in the Guide, namely:

- project design and substantive quality
- project management and capacity of the consortium
- relevance for and contribution to development
- results and sustainability
- cost effectiveness

104. However, the Guidelines for Applicants also introduce significant ambiguity into the proceedings when it comes to the role of the SB, which could have resulted in lack of transparency: they state

> *"The Selection Board will aim to reach a balanced portfolio of projects, taking into account the objectives of the call, the quality of the proposals, the advice from the reviewers and the availability of funding. The Selection Board will select applications on the basis of their scores and the comments of the reviewers."*

105. These two statements in the same paragraph seem to be at odds with each other: it is not clear whether selection will be made on the basis of the scores and comments of the peer reviewers or not. In the first sentence some less transparent elements are introduced into the selection process: what, for example, is meant by a 'balanced portfolio of projects'? How exactly is 'quality of the proposals' judged by the SB itself if not through the comments and advice of the peer reviewers? It might be understood from this paragraph in the Guidelines for Applicants that other selection criteria not adequately described here are applied in the selection process.

106. Applicants whose project proposal is rejected or accepted by the SB are, on request, given access to the peer reviewers' comments (or excerpts from them), and some project teams have used the peer reviews to learn lessons and resubmit an improved proposal in a subsequent Call.

107. Preparatory project applications are not peer reviewed but assessed by the OeAD/LAI against the same 'requirements regarding the content' as full proposals (see 4.2.4). The preparatory project proposals, and presumably their recommendations, are then discussed by the SB on the basis of a summary of the proposal prepared by OeAD/LAI. As indicated by the APPEAR team's form rejection letter applicants are given no information as to why their application was rejected, although further enquiries would presumably produce a more detailed response than the form letter indicates.

Selection Board

108. Evidence from discussions with three of the SB members suggests that the SB itself took some time to come to a collective understanding of the selection criteria including other, more ambiguous factors to take into account, and how exactly they are weighted in decisions. One SB member commented that the range of applications – different in subject, scope, geographical focus etc. – was so wide it was "difficult to find a common denominator for decision-making" at first, though the Board eventually arrived at a consensus on the key factors.

109. This consensus seems, on paper, to give primacy to the peer reviews, though other programme-level factors evidently come into play, such as the geographical spread of projects and the kinds of institutions applying. As noted above (paragraph 89), it was not uncommon for the decisions and advice of the peer reviewers to be overruled in the SB, though the reasons for this are not always clear or clearly documented in the SB meeting minutes.

Scholarships

110. The selection process for PhD scholarships is quite open and transparent, according to the Guide for Applicants. PhD applications are assessed by the APPEAR team in OeAD/LAI based on their scores in the scoring matrix given in the Guide for Applicants and on the assessment provided by the designated Austrian supervisor of the applicant. It is less clear to us how Master's applications are scored as no scoring matrix for them is given in the Guide.

111. The SB formally approves the decisions and advice of OeAD/LAI unless scores are equally balanced and then other programme-level criteria, such as gender aspects, involvement in an academic partnership, balanced overall coverage of thematic priorities or regional distribution, come into play.

12.) To what extent is the selection process in accordance with usual standards of project assessment from the peer reviewers' point of view?

4.2.7 Peer reviewers' perspectives on selection process

112. Of the 49 peer reviewers responding to our survey, 80% have reviewed other joint research and academic project proposals with development objectives or in a development context (e.g. other bilateral higher education for development programmes, EU programmes), and so have a basis for comparison between the APPEAR selection process and others. The Guidelines for Applicants and assessment procedures are considered to be on a par with other international programmes by the majority of respondents (68%) in terms of their clarity and straightforwardness (i.e. language and concepts against which they assess the proposal, their role and responsibilities). At the same time, 60% of the respondents consider the APPEAR selection procedures to be more rigorous or tougher for applicants than other programmes.

4.2.8 Programme design and needs of South partners

13.) Is the programme design suitable for the elaboration of project proposals that respond to

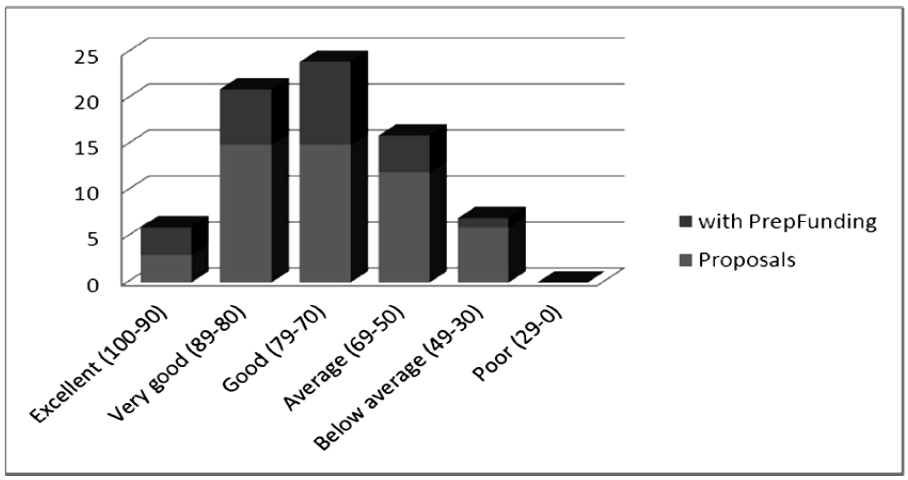
113. Improved responsiveness to the needs of South partner institutions was one of the main drivers in developing the APPEAR programme approach and underpinned the decisions about programme structure by ADA. Representatives of a small group of universities in the South, which had already expressed interest in more formal institutional support from Austria, were informally consulted on programme structure and objectives by ADA during the development of the programme approach (e.g. Bahir Dar University in Ethiopia, Egerton University in

the needs and demands of the southern partners?

Kenya, Makerere University in Uganda).

Overall results

Figure 3: Overview of peer reviews in APPEAR Phase 1[16]



114. The APPEAR selection criteria place considerable emphasis on responsiveness to South partner needs and a realistic appreciation of the context within which a partnership project must be implemented. Almost three-quarters (71%) of peer reviewers responding to our survey said that they are very familiar with the local and developmental circumstances in the South country of the proposals they have reviewed, and therefore the scoring by peer reviewers is a good indicator of how the programme design suits the needs and demands of South partners. Figure 3 shows that well over half the project proposals in Phase 1 scored as excellent, very good or good. It also indicates the value of preparatory projects in ensuring good quality proposals.

Needs addressed by programme design

115. The fundamental problems faced by many academic institutions in the South were summarised by one South partner as lack of experience and expertise in conducting rigorous research to international standards, lack of money (e.g. for chemical reagents and equipment) and lack of trained staff. Certain elements of programme design and structure, therefore, are considered by partners to be a particularly appropriate response to South partner needs:

- The capacity development focus of APPEAR partnership projects is welcomed, especially in smaller and newer institutions where capacity gaps are very evident and militate against international cooperation.
- South partners are able to articulate their needs and priorities well in a participatory programme approach: in several APPEAR projects the South partner initiated and was responsible for elaborating the partnership proposal within the programme parameters.
- Several South partners commented that the possibility for South partners to be the project coordinator was unusual in international cooperation in HE and welcome.
- For both South and North partners, the possibility of winning preparatory funding to facilitate the proposal preparation has been very important, es-

[16] Source: APPEAR facts and figures by Julia Lichtkoppler-Moser. PowerPoint presentation

pecially where there was no history of institutional collaboration.

Constraints of programme design

116. There are also constraints built into the programme structure and project requirements which are less suited to South partner needs and capacities. In some cases, limited time to complete project activities, the need for prompt and accurate reporting to enable release of funds, etc. has evidently presented significant challenges for some South partners.

117. Even where there has been long-standing collaboration between North and South partner institutions, several project partnerships have encountered unforeseen delays or difficulties in implementation, which can be attributed to lack of capacity but also to cultural and social differences. Both North and South partners say they have made assumptions about, for example, management and other working practices, attitudes towards time-keeping and deadlines, accountability etc. For example:

- For one North project coordinator the project has revealed big differences in 'guidance culture' between North and South partners: in the South partner institution team members tend to wait for their manager to initiate activity, but delays are incurred because he is always busy. The project team has no properly defined responsibilities and devolved decision-making is rare.
- Another North project coordinator noted her surprise that their South partner team (in a well-established, large academic institution, experienced in international cooperation) is not proactive about initiating activities but waits to be prompted to begin by the North partner. She now realises that she and her team had unrealistic expectations of the South partner's capacity.
- In a similar case, an Austrian project coordinator voiced worries that the North partner could turn into merely a project manager and administrator.

118. The separation of scholarships from project partnerships in the programme has meant that, for one or two South project partners, it was not clear that scholarships applications could also be associated with and integrated into the partnership project. However, the project time constraints in most cases would have made this integration challenging to achieve.

Partner identification

119. The identification of appropriate and willing partners (both in the South and North) is a critical pre-requisite of successful proposal development. According to the North project coordinators we interviewed, most North partner institutions found the South partners through PhD scholars from the target countries who had either returned or were still studying in their institution in Austria. For South partners, the route to partner identification has often been through academic contacts made at international conferences or through access to research papers etc.

120. Project partners in both North and South say it is much more difficult to find smaller partner universities with less high profiles and less experience of international cooperation, but in the South these kinds of institutions are likely to have far more pressing capacity-development needs appropriate to the APPEAR programme.

Understanding the South partner context

121. These institutional needs, and the context within which academic institutions in the South must work, can often be very challenging for potential North project partners. They are frequently not completely understood or factored into project planning by the North partners, especially when they are institutions with little previous experience of development-related activity.

122. For example, one North project coordinator said that in the targeted country they tried not to team up primarily with the leading university but with a smaller, more remote institution. However, they encountered difficulties unforeseen in the preparatory stage because the selected institution was in a region with a very high engagement of NGOs in development-related activities, which can pay very well in comparison with academic budgets. As a consequence, finding work spaces for the project proved almost impossible and too expensive for the project budget. The partner university did make it quite clear from the very beginning that they had a very serious space problem, but the team did not expect it to be such a dominant factor.

4.2.9 Effectiveness of defined programme parameters

14.) How effective are the defined parameters of the partnership projects (e.g. maximum duration of 3 years, maximum budget of EUR 390,000,-) in order to establish sustainable partnerships, to achieve relevant research and teaching objectives and to develop institutional capacity?

Thematic focus

123. APPEAR covers the following thematic areas:

- strengthening institutional capacities in HE and research for development
- water supply and sanitation, rural development, energy, private sector development, governance and human rights
- poverty reduction, environment and natural resources, peace building and conflict prevention, gender equality
- strengthening skills in social sciences as an instrument systematically to analyse the reasons for poverty and to empower capacities in social science research

124. The omission of health (not only medicine) from this thematic focus was noted as a significant issue for vice-rectors by the representative of Universities Austria (UNIKO), and the inclusion of education and research related to nursing, paramedical and medical-technical professions was advocated by the representative of Association of Universities of Applied Science and two APPEAR project coordinators.

Geographical priorities

125. APPEAR is restricted to the ADC priority countries, namely:

- Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya
- Mozambique
- Cape Verde, Burkina Faso, Senegal
- Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala
- Bhutan, Nepal
- Palestinian Territories

126. Initially these geographical priorities were considered very limiting by the Austrian universities, which were used to the open scholarship schemes. The ADC list of priority countries has subsequently changed (e.g. Central America as a region is no longer on the list) and it is unclear how this will affect any future

phase of APPEAR.

127. If projects wish to include project partners from non-eligible countries only 10% of the budget can be paid to them: in the view of many project coordinators and other stakeholders this constrains the building of regional networks and creates two classes of partners.

Maximum project length

128. Among project coordinators (North and South) of projects involving some element of collaborative research the consensus is that the maximum three-year timescale imposed by the programme is too short to produce robust research results. In projects with capacity development objectives, however, a project of three and even two years' length is more likely to be considered adequate to achieve the project objectives, though not necessarily to ensure sustainable partnerships. Where study courses or curricula are being developed from scratch in the project, two years is considered inadequate and three more appropriate.

129. A number of factors influence these views:

- With few exceptions, projects take a long time actually to start on the planned activities, and many partnerships overestimate their ability to get up to speed quickly. Typically, unless project partners know each other very well indeed, the first six months is taken up with establishing an effective working relationship – something which cannot be achieved during a preparatory project, in which the focus of the potential partners is inevitably on preparing a winning proposal.
- Institutional change – which is what institutional capacity development implies – takes a long time to achieve, particularly, as some South project coordinators commented, in academic institutions. Three years may be sufficient to complete project activities but not necessarily to embed those changes, evaluate their impact and introduce sustainability measures.
- In several projects the coordinators acknowledged that they had made over-ambitious plans in their project, leading quite quickly to activities over-running the defined schedule. Plans often under-estimated institutional 'drag'. One South project coordinator said their plans to set up a specialist centre and a Master's course within their university ran into problems early – "it takes time to set up new things in a university". The new centre has only just become functional after 18 months and it is supposed to be leading on several parts of the new Master's course. He considered a five-year maximum timescale much more realistic.
- Some criticism was voiced by South and North project coordinators of the length of time programme formalities can take: for example, one coordinator was critical of the time it took to review their project's audited accounts and then to release new money, potentially delaying project activities.

Maximum funding and budget constraints

130. Without exception, the North and South project coordinators consulted in this evaluation felt that, overall, the funding levels set by the programme were adequate and appropriate for the partnership projects. Where they argued for extended project timescales they did not link this to expansion in funding.

131. While overall budgets are deemed adequate, some of the constraints on how that budget can be spent in project implementation attracted significant

criticism, particularly:

- The maximum 10% of total budget available for regional partners not in an APPEAR priority country is considered too low and an unnecessary constraint on regional networking; the level of funding does not allow regional partners to be incorporated properly into the project nor other partners to profit from their contributions. It was suggested that this level should more realistically be at least 20%, and greater flexibility should be introduced into budgeting procedures to allow movement of additional funds to regional partners should the need arise.
- South partners in some countries are likely to face problems in continuing to implement project activities up to the end of the project, as the final 15% of funding is paid in arrears once final reports and accounts have been accepted by OeAD/LAI. For some South partners there is no possibility of their institution finding money in advance of payment (e.g. for staff salaries) in order to keep up activities.
- The restriction of overheads to 7% of total project costs was highlighted as a problem by several South and North project coordinators: as an example, one South partner university automatically deducts a 10% overhead from all project-related funding, before passing the funding on to the project team. This means that the project team could not cover the costs of any administrative work and they had to subsidise the APPEAR project through a complicated arrangement using other externally-funded project money.

4.2.10 Effectiveness of funding parameters for preparatory projects

15.) How effective are the defined parameters of the preparatory funding projects (e.g. maximum duration of 6 months, maximum budget of EUR 15,000) in order to prepare high quality partnership proposals that are in line with the programme guidelines?

132. Among those project coordinators consulted who had won preparatory funds the defined parameters of maximum duration and funding were regarded broadly as acceptable, though reported constraints included:

- The level of funding limits the number of people who can visit Austria from the South partner or visit the potential partner country from the North partner. In particular, it may exclude the possibility of including representatives of regional network partners from non-priority countries in the preparatory meetings and visits.
- Available funding also limits the duration of in-country visits and may prevent in-depth meetings and discussions with the full range of local beneficiary groups and other stakeholders.

133. It is clear from the data that high quality project proposals have been facilitated by the preparatory projects within current parameters (see Figure 3), and several project coordinators noted how essential the preparatory project was to their partnership.

134. The full sum of a preparatory grant will be granted only if a formally complete proposal for an APPPEAR partnership is submitted. This rule assumes that there is no merit in institutions investigating the feasibility of forming a productive project partnership but concluding that circumstances, timing or other factors are not right, and that to put further effort into a full proposal would be a waste of resources and time on the part of partner institutions, the APPEAR managing consortium and the SB.

4.2.11 Quality and number of scholarship applications

16.) Are there sufficient high quality

135. Based on the results of the evidently rigorous selection process, there has

scholarship applications that are in line with the programme guidelines?

been no shortage of PhD scholarship applications that meet at least some if not all of the selection criteria for APPEAR. Table 1 shows the numbers for Phase 1 of the programme including the 'extraordinary Call' for applications in 2012 – 42 new PhD candidates were selected and 21 Master's candidates. Beyond this data, the evaluation team has not had access to any more detailed information to inform comments on quality – we take at face value the decisions of the managing consortium and the SB.

136. In one respect it is evident that sufficient scholarship applications were not forthcoming – only 12 of the accepted scholars are female.

4.2.12 Effectiveness of Component 2 in supporting Component 1

17.) How effectively does component two (PhD- and master grants) support component one (academic partnerships)?

137. The evidence suggests that Component 2 has not been very effective in supporting Component 1 during Phase 1. The components have been perceived by stakeholders as separate exercises, with Component 2 acknowledged by OeAD/LAI as a way of easing the transition from diverse scholarship schemes to a development-focused programme, and a way of continuing to fund existing scholars accepted under the North-South Dialogue scholarship scheme.

138. The length of partnership projects (three years maximum) and the challenges of building effective partnerships between North and South institutions in that timescale, have evidently not encouraged many project partners to embed scholarship applications in their proposals: only three such scholarships were accepted for grants during Phase 1. The response to and results of the extraordinary Call for project-related scholarships in 2012 did demonstrate, however, that links between individual scholarships and partnership projects can be made effectively and are seen as providing a contribution to project and partnership sustainability, even if they were not actually embedded in the project plan.

4.2.13 Effectiveness of common calls for Components 1 & 2

18.) How effective is the practice of common calls for both academic partnerships and scholarships?

139. Despite the common calls for both partnership project proposals and scholarship applications in the 1st and 2nd APPEAR Calls, in practice, the two components were not effectively linked. According to project coordinators, the main problems were:

- The restricted timescale for partnership projects discouraged any thought of PhD applications closely linked to the partnership project, as these would probably exceed the maximum length of the project.
- In the time available (even where preparatory projects had preceded the full proposal in the 2nd Call), project partners had not been able to identify appropriate candidates in South partner institutions who could contribute directly to the sustainability of the project and who were also free to take up a scholarship place at short notice.
- Some South partners were unaware of the opportunity to include scholarship applications in their partnership project proposals.

4.2.14 Implementation of communications, information and public relations strategy

19.) How effectively is the strategy for communication, information- and public relations im-

In Austria

140. While elements of the communication strategy have been effectively and actively implemented within Austrian universities, rather less emphasis was placed on communicating the opportunities of APPEAR to the FHs during Phase

plemented?

1 of the programme. The arguments for this were that because the FHs are principally teaching institutions, economically weaker than universities as they do not receive funding for research and without strong research backgrounds. The list of Austrian institutions responding to Calls for proposals in Phase 1 is indicative: only four FHs submitted applications (see Table 3).

Table 3: Austrian HE and research institutions submitting proposals in Phase 1[17]

Austrian Partner Institutions*	Proposals
Carinthia University of Applied Science	2
Danube University Krems	4
FH Joanneum - University of Applied Sciences	3
Graz University of Technology	4
Innsbruck Medical University	2
Institute for Intercultural Research and Cooperation	2
International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Laxenburg	1
Inter-University Research Centre for Technology, Work and Culture	2
Joanneum Research	2
Medical University Graz	2
Medical University Vienna	1
Salzburg University of Applied Sciences	2
University of Applied Sciences Vienna (FH Campus Wien)	1
University of Graz	6
University of Innsbruck	6
University of Klagenfurt	3
University of Leoben	1
University of Linz	1
University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna	16
University of Salzburg	9
University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna	1
University of Vienna	18
Vienna University of Economics and Business	4
Vienna University of Technology	7

In the South

141. The communication strategy has not been particularly effectively implemented in the South priority countries. A comment from a SC member is indicative:

"The programme is not well advertised at least as far as Uganda is concerned. Many developing countries still have a lot of issues with internet access, and I have the impression that the APPEAR team is not making enough effort in using other venues/means to communicate what APPEAR is about to developing countries."

142. The managing consortium argues that promoting APPEAR into diverse HE sectors in the priority countries requires resources and local knowledge that it lacks, and it has relied mainly upon Embassies and ADA Coordination offices to distribute information materials, which they have done on a demand-only basis (i.e. when someone walks in or otherwise contacts them enquiring about HE support).

[17] Source: APPEAR facts and figures by Julia Lichtkoppler-Moser. PowerPoint presentation

143. There has been no systematic monitoring or follow-up to the consortium's communication and information strategy and the strategy itself establishes no specific indicators or measurable results.

4.2.15 Internal and external communications and cooperation between key stakeholders

20.) How effective is the programme communication /cooperation internally (between ADA and the consortium concerning decision making, steering and supervision of the programme) and externally (e.g. between APPEAR team and applicants, project holders, representatives of universities and/or other stakeholders concerning consultation and guidance, acceptance and refusal of projects)?

Internal

144. ADA and OeAD/LAI have cooperated and communicated effectively together to develop and implement the programme. The consortium has always had good working relations with ADA, and it was anticipated that the programme would need a long lead-in time in which they would work together to set it up.

External

Communication with stakeholders in programme implementation

145. OeAD/LAI is regarded by most SB members as a competent and efficient manager of the oversight and selection processes for APPEAR: this includes regular communication and timely provision of information on the applications for grants. Some SC members feel less well informed, partly because the SC meets only once a year. OeAD/LAI keeps SC members informed of progress (that is, selection of projects and scholars, project coordinator meetings and other events) between meetings. However, there was consensus among the external SC members (non-ADA and non FMEIA) that there is very limited if any follow-up on SC discussions or information about the results (if any) of the Committee's recommendations by either ADA or OeAD/LAI between meetings.

Communication with applicants, project partnerships etc.

146. Project coordinators from North and South also regard the guidelines and procedures for the programme as good: several coordinators with experience in international cooperation consider them to be a model of their kind. They are also complimentary about OeAD/LAI for their hands-on support to potential project partners during the proposal-writing stages, and their follow-up of problems. Where possible the consortium tries to identify and alert applicants to areas of weaknesses in project proposals before they enter the formal selection process.

147. During implementation, project partners also report that overall the managing consortium offers good support on issues such as financial reporting, and flexibility in budget revision. OeAD/LAI are in regular and informal contact and communication with Austrian academic institutions about APPEAR.

4.2.16 ADA responsibilities

21.) To which extent does the Austrian Development Agency fulfil its responsibilities as contractor[18] concerning steering,

148. The responsibilities of ADA as contractee or owner of the contract are not defined in any contracting or programme documentation so it is difficult for the evaluation team to be definitive about whether or not it fulfils its responsibilities.

149. As originator of the HE Strategy and 'owner' of the APPEAR programme, it automatically has an important strategic oversight role to play in providing

[18] See footnote 17 above regarding the term 'contractor' in English.

implementation and monitoring of the programme?

overall direction, ensuring coherence of the programme with ADC strategy and priorities. As the sole funder of the programme ADA must also play a supervisory role in ensuring the programme is and remains properly accountable and provides appropriate return on investment. As far as we can determine, ADA exercises these oversight and supervisory roles actively and effectively.

150. ADA staff have pointed out that APPEAR is unusual compared to other contracted out programmes because ADA designed the overall programme structure and content itself and finances the programme 100%. This is apparently different from other ADA financing instruments and contractual arrangements, such as grant contributions to multi-donor facilities, NGO co-financing and grant agreements, in which typically the content of the programme or project is designed by the grant applicant or NGO and not by ADA. Funding (not usually 100%) by ADA is agreed on the basis that this proposed content is in line with ADC goals and principles. ADA argues that, because of this unusual contracting form, ADA has more duties, rights and responsibilities than in its other external contracts, which legitimately includes close cooperation between ADA and the managing consortium.

151. Nonetheless, there seems to be general agreement among stakeholders that ADA's role is one of leadership, while the managing consortium OeAD/LAI are clearly designated as responsible for programme management in the TOR for the management contract[19].

152. The ADA Education and Science Adviser characterised her role in relation to that of the programme manager using the analogy of a ship and that she is:

> *"the person (pilot?) who is responsible for the course (the right direction), for all the things which make the ship running. I'm responsible that the plans beyond the daily course are covered (e.g. reasons for buying that ship, for going to these countries, for choosing this course, for the cargo, for the mission of the ship,…). AND I'm the representative of the ship-owning company"*[20]

153. However, during the pilot Phase 1, ADA has played a more active role than this analogy implies in planning, budgeting and problem solving, down to project level in some cases. ADA and OeAD/LAI argue that there are good reasons for this close involvement; early in programme implementation many questions arose relating to programme structure and procedures, for which OeAD/LAI needed ADA decisions or advice.

154. ADA (Education and Science Adviser) chairs the SB and has an additional voting member on the Board. The Chair sees her role as moderator of the sessions; keeping the meetings on schedule; trying to arrive at consensus in decisions and ensuring that the SB completes its tasks as defined in its TOR. Several SB members feel that ADA dominates the SB, setting direction and the tone of discussions. OeAD/LAI as programme manager has only two 'consultatory votes' on the SB and it is the APPEAR team's view that it cannot argue cases with the Board even if its representatives are well informed about particular applications or institutions.

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[19] *"The programme management is the responsibility of the contractor [i.e.OeAD/LAI]. This is responsible for ensuring that the programme is so conceptualised and realised that the set targets are reached and the programme…as mentioned above (Section 1-6) carried out and the existing framework of the ADA guidelines adhered to "*Translated from Nord-Süd-Hochschulkooperationen Programm 2009 – 2014: Leistungsbeschreibung/Terms of Reference („TOR") 07.05.2009. Paragraph 7.1.

[20] Written comments to the evaluation team by G. Findl, ADA Education and Science Adviser, 15th November 2012

155. In terms of fulfilling a programme monitoring role, ADA takes receipt of annual and intermediate reports from OeAD/LAI and plays key roles on both the SB and SC. It is also in daily communication with the managing consortium, sending a representative to most if not all APPEAR events (project presentations, workshops, etc.). ADA has one place on the SC, which is chaired by FMEIA.

4.2.17 Implementation of the gender strategy

22.) To what extent has the programme been successful in implementing the gender strategy?

156. The gender strategy provides a number of specific indicators by which its implementation can be assessed at programme and project level. Table 4 lists these indicators and summarises evidence of implementation.

Table 4: Indicators for implementation of Gender Strategy at programme level

Gender Strategy indicators	Evidence of implementation/comments
1.1 Programmatic specifications	
Gender is a central issue at the structural/organisational level: gender mainstreaming as a fundamental principle as well as systematic advancement of women guarantees equal participation in all project activities and as beneficiaries	The programme has been unable to fulfil this guarantee in the funded projects: the many contextual and social factors within which projects are conceived and implemented militate against this and the APPEAR programme cannot control these factors Evidence from selected projects suggests partial participation by women
Gender is a central issue at the content level: gender perspective is demonstrated in the project teaching and research contents	This is more in the control of the APPEAR programme and evidence suggests that selected projects demonstrate this
1.2 Composition of the committees and of the APPEAR team	
Women are equally represented in the Austrian committee	Women are over-represented on both committees
In the Selection Board one member with voting rights is a gender expert	Yes
The members of the APPEAR team are aware of gender mainstreaming and already have practical experience	Yes, demonstrated in consultation discussions, activities and documentation
1.3 Allocation practice (allocation of budget resources)	
Additional points for projects that have a positive influence on equal opportunities, living conditions and status of women	The peer reviewers scoring matrix does not weight this element over others. The TOR of the SB do not indicate that it is part of selection practice. If such additional points are given, the practice is not documented
In case of equal results and qualification, projects with explicit gender-related content and/or implications are given preference	The TOR of the SB do not indicate that is part of selection practice. If such additional points are given, the practice is not documented
In case of equal rating and qualification applications of female candidates are given preference	Yes
Preferential support for gender research in development cooperation contexts	One gender research project was accepted from 17: information is not available to determine how many gender research applications were received in Phase 1
1.4 Implementation	

Inclusion of gender-sensitive questions in standardised monitoring forms and formats	Yes
Description of the gender mainstreaming measures and allocation of budget resources in reports	Not explicit in two annual reports for APPEAR
Transparency in the whole programme implementation enables monitoring of the gender strategy	Gender strategy provides clear indicators to monitor at project as well as programme level; promotion of gender issues and mainstreaming is embedded into programme and project documentation ensuring transparency. However, monitoring the gender strategy is not included in the logframe plans for monitoring and evaluation
1.5 Public relations	
Explicit presentation of gender as a cross-sectional matter and as a selection criterion in all information documents	To the extent possible, yes
Gender-sensitive presentation of women and men in all media	To the extent possible, yes
1.6 Additional measures	
Implementation of awareness programmes, especially in the institutions of the partners in the South	Not undertaken as far as programme information available indicates.
Female applicants are supported in their search for a scientific supervisor in Austria	Not explicitly documented – possible on a case by case basis as OeAD/LAI provide individual support to scholars
In the framework of extra-curricular activities for students, courses on Women's Empowerment will be offered for female scholarship holders if requested	Not explicitly documented – possible on a case by case basis as OeAD/LAI provide individual support to scholars

157. OeAD/LAI provided statistics on the level of female involvement in partnership project applications during Phase 1: Table 5 shows that participation by women was low overall, presumably reflecting gender issues in the North and South universities, but that the acceptance level among those applications coordinated by women was proportionally higher than those coordinated by men: seven out of 22 submissions by women coordinators (30%), compared to 10 out of 52 by men (19%). It is not clear whether this results from additional weighting given to female coordinated projects by the SB or from the actual quality of proposals.

Table 5: Female and male project coordinators in APPEAR project applications

Coordinator	Proposals	Formally correct	Accepted projects
Female	23	22	7
Male	67	52	10
Total	90	74	17

158. Gender mainstreaming and embedding gender aspects into project content is evidently one of the most challenging issues for project partnerships: the managing consortium reported after the 1st and 2nd Calls:

"in most of the applications the gender concepts and integration have been unsatisfactory. 'Gender' as an analytical dimension and category of science and capaci-

ty development is not reflected adequately in most of the applications. The gender aspect is limited in most cases to 'women' and 'awareness'" [21]

159. The social science applicants overall were better than the science applicants at demonstrating gender sensitivity and providing gender analysis; OeAD/LAI attributed this to the "still highly patriarchal scientific landscape" in Austria.

160. In workshops and meetings of APPEAR project coordinators the APPEAR team has given special attention to the gender dimension. The team emphasises that gender is often misunderstood as a relating only to female inclusion rather than the more complex analysis of unequal distribution of power and resources within a society which requires systematic assessment and reflection, regardless of the specific thematic focus of each project.

161. The gender expert on the SB shares the views of the managing consortium and endorses their view that, rather than rejecting project applications on the grounds of unsatisfactory gender dimensions, OeAD/LAI should adopt a more proactive approach to helping applicants strengthen the gender aspects of their proposals and plans. It intends to begin with a workshop for interested stakeholders specifically on gender issues.

162. With regard to scholarships, Table 1 shows that only 12 of the scholars funded under Phase 1 of APPEAR are female. OeAD/LAI would like to see additional measures available for supporting women to get scholarship grants, such as inclusion of maternity leave where necessary and staying longer in the their own country.

4.3 Unplanned positive / negative side effects

4.3.1 Influence of the programme on academic and research communities North and South

23.) Has the establishment of the programme so far influenced /changed the opinion of

- the academic community in Austria; and/or
- the representatives of higher education / research institutions in the eligible partner countries;

especially with reference to defined approaches and principles (e.g. participatory approach, partnership, ownership, bottom-up and demand-driven

Academic community in Austria

163. Judging by the significant number of applications for APPEAR partnership projects from a wide range of Austrian universities (though not FHs) it is a fair assumption that there has been some cumulative change in attitudes towards the new approach to HE development cooperation. This could not be tested, however, through any evidence-gathering for this evaluation and it remains a hypothesis based on consultation with a small number of academics and senior managers in HE.

164. According to the representative of UNIKO, the university vice-rectors were disappointed that the APPEAR announcements and programme structure were published and known about too late for them to integrate any of it into their performance indicators and funding plans for the short- to medium-term. OeAD/LAI feels that, though sceptical at first, the senior managers of HE institutions changed their minds as more was learned about the programme and once positive project application results began to emerge. Of the four university vice-rectors we have been able to consult directly (through a survey), three agree or strongly agree that APPEAR is a very positive step forward.

[21] Source: Translated from Zwischenbericht (2.Jahresbericht) OEZA Vertrag 0894-00/2009 Per 31.12.2011

approaches, gender sensitivity, concept of culturally open-mined knowledge)?

Representatives of HE / research institutions in South partner countries

165. There is no evidence to suggest that APPEAR is as yet having any significant impact, or indeed is very widely known among HE and research institutions other than in those whose partnership projects are being funded. In these institutions senior managers are well aware of the APPEAR projects, often as one of a portfolio of international cooperation projects that share similar approaches and principles (most of which are enshrined in the internationally agreed approaches to development).

4.4 Other issues arising

4.4.1 The current role of the Steering Committee (SC)

166. The TOR for the management contract state that the activities of the contractor will be overseen by a SC, which will be responsible for supervision of programme implementation. The SC's own TOR list the following tasks:

- continuous checking of the strategic orientation of the programme
- feedback and adjustment of the programme to international developments in the field of higher education and research for development
- supervision of the programme administration and monitoring of the evaluation
- advising the consortium on questions related to the execution of the programme

167. The TOR also state that the SC "usually holds two meetings a year" but to date has met only twice – in May 2011 and March 2012 – and a once a year meeting was endorsed by all SC members in the 2012 meeting[22]. However, in consultation for this evaluation several SC members thought there should be two meetings per year for the SC to be effective.

168. On the evidence of the minutes of the last (and only) two meetings, the main tasks of the SC are broadly addressed in meetings, but the main thrust of discussion is around programme administration, monitoring progress of the calls and advising the consortium on the actual execution of the programme. Contributions on the strategic orientation of the programme are rarer and weaker. It is also unclear from the minutes what has been the outcome of some of the SC's suggestions or recommendations – was the required action taken by ADA or OeAD? Do SC recommendations in fact carry any weight within the programme?

169. A consensus view of the SC among committee members is that it does not function as a steering committee but rather as an advisory committee. Several members suggested that its focus should be more on HE and development issues and international trends, with more input from the outside through more representation from other international agencies.

4.4.2 Role of the ADA coordinators

170. ADA coordinating offices exist in Ethiopia, Uganda, Mozambique, Burkina Faso, the Palestinian Territories and Bhutan. They have an average of five staff members including support staff and the ADA coordinator.

171. Education (and higher education in particular) is not an ADC priority thematic area in the countries where there are ADA coordinating offices, and if an APPEAR project's thematic scope does not fall within country strategy priorities it is difficult for ADA coordinators to include it in their programme of work.

[22] Resolution-Minutes: Meeting of the appear Steering Committee March 2012. Item 7

172. ADA coordinators are sent summaries of all APPEAR project proposals involving their country and they comment on the extent to which the proposal(s) matches the national development and poverty reduction policies/strategies/priorities of the country, and possibly the status, capacity and specialisms of the proposed partner university where these are evident. Typical ADA coordinator involvement in APPEAR was summarised by one of them as follows:

- They are consulted by ADA HQ on individual proposals and give feedback according to a "quite demanding" checklist of questions: for the 3rd Call this coordinator said he and his staff simply did not have the time or capacity to make detailed responses.
- They promote APPEAR, often actively where they think it may have impact.
- Some HE institutions call the coordinating office to ask about appropriate Austrian universities and the staff refer them to websites etc.

173. ADA coordinators are also asked by ADA HQ to monitor the implementation of APPEAR projects, though it is not clear exactly what this entails in practice. The comments by ADA coordinators on the APPEAR applications are reported (but not documented) for the SB by an ADA SB member, who notes that they are important in the SB discussions as they mostly comment on the choice of partners from the field perspective and country experience. At least two of the coordinators we consulted were uncertain as to whether their input on projects was taken into account by the SB as they had not feedback on that issue.

174. ADA also expects and requires that South partners will go to meet the ADA coordinator in their country and develop a relationship with them; this is monitored by the ADA Education and Science Adviser but there is nothing in the partner contract that makes establishing relations with ADA coordinators in this way mandatory. North partners can also enlist ADA coordinators to help them troubleshoot problems if they arise in the project.

175. ADA Coordinators have no official role in harmonisation activities (that is, advising on how APPEAR can take account of and complement other donor-funded HE interventions in the country) as education is not a priority sector in the countries where they operate; they do not attend education donor coordination meetings and have no contact with other donors in HE. Occasionally (according to one coordinator), they are able to provide information about other relevant development partner funding or programmes if they happen to know about them.

4.4.3 Financial obligation of the project coordinator's institution

176. The APPEAR contract with designated project coordinators requires the project coordinating institution to carry 100% financial responsibility, regardless of whether the coordinator is an Austrian or a South partner. The principle is to have one responsible contract organisation per project. This obliges the coordinating institution to be accountable for correct financial reporting for the project and, in the event of any default by project partners, to be liable for repayment of any unaccounted funds. The alternative would have been to allow the possibility of a write-off of the unaccounted sum. In consultation, OeAD confirmed that it would be difficult to enforce this aspect of the contract by asking for financial redress, particularly from a South partner. The likelihood, therefore, is that a default situation would end in a write-off anyway. The maximum loss would only ever be €100,000 because this is the maximum that can be transferred to partners in one instalment, and a second instalment can only be transferred when the first has been clearly accounted for by accepted audits.

177. Some North partner coordinators had difficulties persuading their institutions to carry this contractual risk, assuming that it would be more likely for South partner institutions to default than North partners. As the North partners are monitored along the strict Austrian accounting rules supervised by the Third Party Funding offices of the universities, it is extremely unlikely that there would be any default by a North partner. At least one North project coordinator was told by his institution's managers that the contractual requirement as it stands would prevent any further engagement by his institution in APPEAR.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

178. This section presents the conclusions and views of the evaluation team based on the evidence and findings summarised above.

179. Overall the evaluation team concludes that the APPEAR programme in conception, design and implementation during Phase 1 has been a success. The transition from a disparate range of untargeted scholarships driven by largely academic goals to a coherent international HE cooperation programme with explicit developmental goals is a considerable achievement on the part of ADA and the subsequent successful management of programme implementation can be attributed mainly to OeAD/LAI.

5.2 Relevance

5.2.1 Development relevance

180. The APPEAR programme embodies the approach, principles and priorities of the ADC HE Strategy.

181. In approach and design APPEAR is broadly consistent with the international approaches to development cooperation as defined in the MDGs and the Paris Declaration, for example, though there are some areas of weakness, notably:

- harmonisation and complementarity
- managing by results

Harmonisation and complementarity

182. In comparison to HE development cooperation programmes funded by other donor nations APPEAR is a small programme: for example, the 2011-12 budget for the equivalent programme of Flemish universities was €35 million, allocated from the development cooperation budget of the Belgian government. The challenges of coordinating international donor and development partner activity in HE are well recognised and information, though publicly available, is not readily found or centrally collated anywhere. However, if more efforts were made to identify which are the key HE and research donors in APPEAR priority countries and what cooperation and coordination opportunities exist for potential and existing APPEAR partnerships, the APPEAR programme at national and regional levels could be strengthened.

Managing by results

183. The programme would benefit from establishing the basis for results-based management, in order to assess programme effectiveness (the cumulative effect of the elements of the programme over time) more coherently and to be able to make comparisons across regions/countries etc.

184. Identifying the programme-level results of APPEAR will be challenging because the inputs and activities that contribute to its overall objectives and goals are implemented by a range of different institutional stakeholders and in different countries. While expected results at individual project level have been clearly identified and will be monitored, the results chain from programme to project level is not well articulated.

5.2.2 Visibility of development related issues

185. The APPEAR programme Phase 1 in its first three years has already made a good contribution to the greater visibility of development-related issues in the Austrian academic community, evident through the response to the Calls for proposals. For many Austrian academics, however, understanding the specific development context and cultural and social differences that deter-

mine choices and priorities for their South partners remains a challenge. It is a challenge to develop a project proposal that meets the development relevance criteria and aligns with programme principles and priorities; implementing the project while maintaining these principles and priorities in practice can be even more difficult to achieve.

5.3 Effectiveness

5.3.1 Contract model of programme management

186. Overall, the evidence suggests that the method by which the contract to manage APPEAR was tendered and awarded has led to effective implementation of the programme. Using an external contractor has proved its worth and there is no evidence to suggest considering an alternative method. The lessons learned from Phase 1 of the programme should provide the basis for improved programme design for the tender for Phase 2.

187. The three-year plus one two-year prolongation contract period and inflexibility of contracting rules (no second prolongation possible) significantly constrained the work of the management consortium. The constraints have included unnecessary haste in preparation of the programme procedures, guidelines and management of the calls for proposals, resulting in: the adoption of emergency measures, such as the 'extraordinary' and restricted Call for scholarship proposals among project partnerships; and uncertainties for the managing consortium about entering into contractual commitments with APPEAR projects and scholars which would outlast the current management contract.

188. We endorse in principle the periodic re-tendering of public sector service contracts as a valuable accountability and quality assurance measure. However, the terms of contract for the APPEAR programme, which is primarily concerned with fostering long-term relationships between North and South partner institutions, would enable more effective implementation if they were to cover a longer timescale and include greater flexibility (if Austrian government rules and regulations will allow) in contract prolongation.

5.3.2 Programme leadership and management

Roles and responsibilities

189. Overall, the leadership and management arrangements for the programme are not well or clearly defined in the programme documentation (contracts, TOR, etc.). Without these clearly defined roles and responsibilities it is not possible to assess the performance or effectiveness of either ADA or the managing consortium in fulfilling them. There also exists the potential for confusion among key internal and external stakeholders as to where their different responsibilities lie in practice in relation to programme implementation.

Defining leadership and management

190. Leadership and management are different functions which need clear differentiation. Annex 4 provides some examples of the different and overlapping responsibilities appropriate to programme management and leadership. ADA, as the sponsor and owner of the programme, has a legitimate supervisory and leadership role to play, particularly to ensure the continued relevance of the APPEAR programme to ADC policies and strategic priorities. Our findings lead us to conclude that the ADA Education and Science Adviser has been too involved in decision making and problem solving on individual projects within the programme: one example given in discussions was OeAD/LAI referring to ADA a decision concerning the renegotiation of an APPEAR project budget.

191. OeAD/LAI's role as programme manager is a powerful one and it is right and appropriate that robust supervisory procedures are in place and observed to assure government and HE stakeholders of the programme's legitimacy, transparency and accountability. However, with

these in place, the consortium should be able to fulfil its role as programme manager independently, without referral to ADA, building on its know-how and experience as the programme matures.

The Selection Board

192. The selection process, implemented according to agreed guidelines and standards of transparency, is a fundamental part of programme management, and OeAD/LAI is responsible and accountable to ADA for the outcomes of that process. The work of the SB is a crucial and decisive element in the selection process: it makes the final decisions on funding awards and advises the programme manager to "start the contracting process"[23]. As such, we believe that the SB is first and foremost an instrument of programme management, not programme oversight or leadership, and should be chaired by OeAD/LAI the programme manager.

193. Two examples of working with selection boards from other European HE and research cooperation for development programmes may help to make this point:

- NUFFIC, the Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in HE, manages the Netherlands Initiative for Capacity development in Higher Education (NICHE), a development cooperation programme supported under the Dutch Bilateral Cooperation Programme. Tenders are issued at country-level for institutional partnership grants and assessed by a Tenders Evaluation Committee (TEC), put together by NUFFIC. The TEC assesses the bids but is not responsible for making the final decision on awarding a grant. The TEC provides NUFFIC with advice on the basis of which it will decide whether or not to award the grant.
- The Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR) operates a secretariat to manage its VLIR-UOS programme, which includes calls for proposals for TEAM partnership projects to strengthen the research and education capacity of HE institutions in eligible South countries. A selection process based on open competition of all submitted project proposals is made by the Selection Committee of VLIR-UOS, chaired by VILR-UOS and composed of experts from Flemish universities, the Belgian government Directorate-General for Development and external experts.

The Steering Committee

194. The SC, meeting only once a year, is not and cannot be effective in supervising and monitoring the programme, yet does not currently provide an effective expert advisory function to either OeAD/LAI or ADA.

195. In considering how to make the SC more effective it should be recognised that the SC is an instrument of oversight and strategic leadership (not programme management) and as such its function should be to support and/or advise ADA as leader of the APPEAR programme (see Annex 4).

5.3.3 Programme structure and parameters

Structure

Components 1 and 2

196. The separation of partnership projects from scholarships, while arguably appropriate to the circumstances of Phase 1 of the programme for legacy reasons, looks increasingly redundant as Phase 1 funded project partnerships mature and in the light of the enthusiastic response from project partners to the 'extraordinary' Call for scholarship applications from partner institutions. There is overall consensus that scholarships should be embedded into partnership projects.

[23] Selection Board TOR

197. The synchronisation of scholarships and project partnerships will need some thought. Project partnerships should not be under pressure to nominate PhD and Master students only in the first year of the project. Scholarship candidates are likely to emerge as the projects develop and be able then to contribute to the sustainability of the projects. However, this implies that students may need to be supported beyond the formal end of the project.

198. Questions therefore remain about whether or not some kind of small 'free-standing' scholarship fund should be retained if the structure is changed to merge the two components, and what changes might then have to be made to programme parameters to accommodate integrated scholarships more effectively.

Preparatory and full proposals

199. The current structure of separate preparatory funding applications contributes significantly to the time-consuming and labour-intensive nature of the overall APPEAR funding application process and imposes quite a burden of work upon potential partner institutions. However, the opportunity to get preparatory grants to enable potential partnership meetings to take place and facilitate the development of good quality, full project proposals is greatly appreciated by applicants and should not be lost were the programme to be restructured.

200. The requirement for a full project proposal to be produced as a consequence of receiving funding for preparatory projects, unless the partnership is willing to forfeit 50% of the preparatory funding, seems an overly severe regulation. It is possible that some of the 24 partnerships that received preparatory grants may only have been 'going through the motions' of completing and submitting a full proposal because they needed reimbursement for the costs of activities already undertaken and money already spent, even though they learnt during the preparatory phase that the project was not feasible as envisaged.

201. We believe it is a perfectly legitimate and accountable response, on completion of preparatory meetings and discussions, for potential partners to conclude and present sound arguments why the preparatory idea for a project would not be appropriate or timely etc. They should not be penalised for being sensible.

Parameters

Eligible countries

202. The list of ADC priority countries is getting shorter as ADC withdraws from the Central American region. There is uncertainty over how this might affect APPEAR in its next Phase. It would be detrimental to Austrian HE interests to make the list of eligible countries any shorter than it currently is, and the loss of eligible Central American and West African countries where good academic connections have been formed and fostered over years would be particularly regrettable. Such a step would seem to run counter to the principle of sustainability and greatly constrain opportunities for regional networking, which is one of the HE Strategy goals.

203. As ADC policies on country and regional priorities change, we conclude that there are good arguments for retaining <u>all</u> originally eligible countries in APPEAR, regardless of whether the country or region is any longer an ADC priority. This would encourage sustainability measures, such as follow-up projects, expanding national networks of institutions benefiting from and building on Austrian collaboration, and regional networking activities. Retaining engagement in APPEAR for countries in which ADC is otherwise withdrawing might also help to ameliorate the politically negative effects of withdrawal, providing a basis for a new country relationship and favouring opportunities for that country to build relationships with the EU.

Thematic constraints

204. We recognise that only a few of those people we consulted raised the issue of the omission of health from APPEAR; we are also aware that the APPEAR thematic focus omits several other

key disciplines. Nonetheless, we regard public health (excluding medical doctor education) as a potentially important contribution to the APPEAR thematic focus, given how interwoven public health, social welfare and rural development (for example) are in South partner countries. We also believe that the FHs could contribute significantly in this disciplinary area in both institutional capacity development and scholarships, and that opening up this area could stimulate their greater involvement in APPEAR.

Timescales

205. The maximum length for a partnership project is currently too short. All experience from APPEAR Phase 1 and other bilateral HE development programmes focusing on research and institutional capacity development indicates that for the first six months to one year a project can be subject to delays and setbacks as the project partners build a working relationship and overcome knowledge gaps and false assumptions about, for example, capacity, cultural and social contexts. This is a legitimate part of a project and must be recognised as such if projects are to succeed in their purpose and result in sustainable academic relationships.

Budgetary constraints

206. Levels of funding for APPEAR projects seem adequate and realistic for the scale of partnerships and activities so far proposed. This may need to be carefully monitored, however, as partnerships mature and possible extension projects are funded, possibly involving more ambitious national and regional networking.

207. There are a number of budgetary constraints on planning and implementation, however, which could be reconsidered, for example:

- Greater flexibility in the percentage of overall budget (currently 10%) could be allowable for non-eligible country partners in regional networks.
- More realistic maximum overhead costs could be allowable: the current 7% maximum is inadequate for most academic institutions.
- Projects could automatically have the option to carry over unspent funds to the end of the project, and apply, if necessary, for an extension to the project timescale to ensure funds are spent appropriately.

5.3.4 Application and selection procedures

208. The current application and selection procedures have proved to be effective in delivering good quality APPEAR-funded projects, but at the expense of some elements of transparency for applicants and other stakeholders. They also currently involve lengthy, time-consuming and repetitive procedures that are fundamentally inefficient for all stakeholders, particularly applicants (for example, in developing a preparatory proposal and then a full proposal).

209. There are some areas where it seems time could be saved by either streamlining procedures or speeding up the selection process. For example:

- The peer review process deadlines could be shortened.
- Assessment of scholarship applications by the SB might be streamlined.
- Where an application is related to a partnership project application already accepted by the SB there seems little point in the Board making a separate full assessment of the scholarship application itself.

210. Although the documentation for the programme is a model of plain language and straightforward guidance, it lacks coherence (between, for example, the Guidelines for Applicants and for Reviewers) and clarity in a number of aspects (there are ambiguities and unexplained concepts); these can and, no doubt, will be revised and improved for the Phase 2 of the programme.

211. One consequence of this ambiguity is that the criteria used for selection are not as transparent as they seem from the documentation: there are undocumented factors and decisions that could be open to query and which cannot always be adequately defended (e.g. if peer reviewers' scores are overruled in the SB).

5.3.5 Partner identification

212. During Phase 1 the main method of partner identification for North institutions has been through past and current PhD scholars from priority country universities. This will be a method of diminishing value as the number of PhD scholarships now awarded is considerably smaller and may reduce further in future not only in numbers but also in thematic coverage. On the other hand, APPEAR should allow institutional partners to develop and nurture much deeper and wider relationships within HE in the target countries, not only with their partner institutions but also elsewhere in the country and region.

213. One outcome of relying on PhD student connections to identify partners, and of academics' natural inclination to seek out the highest quality research partners, has been to push institutions towards the 'donor darlings' in the South: the large, prestigious HE institutions with international reputations, very often underpinned by heavy reliance on international development partner assistance to maintain that status. It is arguable from the Austrian political perspective that this is a mistaken approach for APPEAR. In comparison with most other European and North American HE development assistance initiatives, APPEAR is a small programme. Being 'a small fish in a large pool' of other, richer donors is not conducive to maximising the impact of APPEAR in terms of visible and positive results in institutional capacity development and research cooperation

214. There are considerable challenges for North partners in choosing smaller, newer, less well-resourced universities, not least the very lack of capacity and research experience that APPEAR is dedicated to addressing. These challenges can be overcome if expectations and project plans are realistic and the North partner can be assured of its own real benefits from the cooperation partnership.

215. Small, new institutions can grow into prestigious ones: as an example, Jimma University in Oromia region in Ethiopia was established in 1999 from the merger of technical and agricultural colleges. Through the VLIR-UOS programme the University of Ghent began a partnership programme with Jimma in 2006 and is still engaged in a joint research programme funded by VLIR-UOS. Other international cooperation partners were subsequently attracted to collaborate with Jimma. In 2011 and for the third time Jimma University was ranked as the leading university of Ethiopia by the Ministry of Education.

216. The FHs, in particular, would benefit from widening the focus of the programme actively to seek out smaller institutional partners. The South partner range of capacity development opportunities related to the development of study courses, teaching development, and institutional management in applied and social sciences would match well with the FHs' strengths, and possibly open up opportunities for the collaborative development of practice- and community-based research.

5.3.6 Communications and information

Communications

217. Although the current communications and information strategy has been effective in Austria, the relevance of the programme to the FHs has not been effectively demonstrated.

218. Furthermore, the strategy has not been sufficiently focused on potential partners and the HE sector in South priority countries. The challenges of communicating about APPEAR nationally and in the HE sector are real but can be addressed through building a better knowledge base

and range of contacts. ADA coordinators are unlikely to be able to contribute time or resources to this, given their other priorities and the relatively small scale of APPEAR within ADC overall.

Information and knowledge base

219. If APPEAR is to be better harmonised with other international development partner activity in HE development in the South, all stakeholders need more information about who are the key players in HE international cooperation, what are the parameters and priorities of their programmes, in which countries and regions they are most active, what and where are their current and ongoing project priorities. This kind of information is publicly available but from a diverse and wide-ranging number of sources, including websites, national ministries of education and HE, international and national development partners and donor agencies, etc. It is a significant but not impossible research task to establish a knowledge base of this kind, but one that would benefit APPEAR in allowing potential and real opportunities for better programme focus and synergies with other programmes.

220. More general information provision about HE institutions, especially small, less well-known universities, in the South priority countries (location and size, faculties, subject specialisations, key academics, contact details, etc.) would also greatly benefit Austrian universities and FHs wishing to engage in APPEAR but lacking immediate contacts with South partner institutions. Although there are databases of potential partner institutions available, in Austria and also managed by the European Commission, for example, they do not always cover the priority countries or the smaller institutions. What is needed to broaden the scope of APPEAR and facilitate partner identification is a kind of 'match-making' service, providing information and being proactive in facilitating contacts between appropriate North and South potential partners.

Support to potential and actual project partners

221. The hands-on advice and support from OeAD/LAI in preparation of project proposals, negotiation of partner contracts and reporting have been effective. The response to the workshops for project partners and other stakeholders offered during Phase 1 was very positive. More on specific aspects such as programme and project design, selection criteria, reporting and accounting, would be welcomed.

5.3.7 Implementation of the gender strategy

222. The gender strategy has been only partially successful and not fully implemented. Gender mainstreaming is evidently an intractable problem for many project partnerships. It relates to the social and cultural environment and academic context of both North and South partners, and the institutional and cultural change required to put gender equality into practice is a long-term process, largely outside the control of ADC or the APPEAR team.

223. The steps that can be taken by the managing consortium to keep a focus on gender aspects are already clear to OeAD/LAI and other stakeholders in APPEAR, namely:

- overt preference for female scholars with appropriate qualifications
- a more proactive approach towards helping applicants strengthen gender aspects of project proposals.

6 Lessons learned

6.1 Building experience in and understanding of development issues

224. For many North partner institutions and project team members, unused to working in development or international contexts, understanding the specific development context and cultural and social differences that determine choices and priorities for their South partners will remain a challenge. As institutional and programme experience grows, project partnerships may demonstrate greater realism about cultural and social environments, ways of working etc. among partners and about what can realistically be achieved in these contexts.

6.2 Communications priorities

225. As APPEAR project implementation proceeds and a greater volume and range of participating departments and institutions is achieved, one communications priority will be to transfer the experience and lessons learned about working in development contexts among potential and existing projects, and within individual North partner institutions.

226. It seems likely that as more of the Phase 1 projects implement their activity plans and begin to see results, there will be more interesting and news-worthy stories to tell to HE colleagues and the informed public. It would be valuable if the messages communicated included a focus on the benefits gained by the North partner institutions as a countermeasure to the institutional constraints on engagement in activities that do not have immediately obvious academic or research returns on investment. Another communications priority will be to transfer these messages across the programme (among potential and existing projects), but also within individual North partner institutions from department to department.

6.3 Relationship building

227. The experience of APPEAR Phase 1 corroborates what is widely known in longer-established academic and research cooperation programmes for development: project partnerships can seldom jump straight into project activities. Building working relationships between partners and overcoming knowledge gaps and false assumptions about capacity, cultural and social contexts, for example, are all a legitimate part of international projects and must be recognised as such if projects are to succeed in their purpose and result in sustainable academic relationships. The programme design and structure needs to reflect this reality.

6.4 Engaging with Austrian universities

228. In the APPEAR preparatory stages ADA worked hard to have a formal and informal dialogue with Austrian universities that would be impacted by the phasing out of scholarship schemes. At the time, however, the universities were not open to a wider debate on development relevance and potential gains for HE Austria in adopting a programmatic and partnership project approach. Now that the programme is maturing, ADA and the programme manager should be able to ensure that the rationale for any structural or other changes to the programme are properly communicated and all stakeholders offered an opportunity to contribute their views in a timely manner before final decisions are made.

6.5 Regional networking

229. The regional networking aspects of APPEAR, though limited in scope in Phase 1, seem to be very positive drivers of success. It will be important to ensure that proposed structures for Phase 2 of the programme facilitate regional networking and that this aspect of partnership building is openly explored and encouraged.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Relevance

7.1.1 Development relevance

Managing by results

230. ADA should develop the basis for results-based management of the programme (not the individual projects); this would require identification of a series of programme-level expected results and indicators, against which a detailed assessment of programme impact could be made, possibly at the end of Phase 2. The exercise should be based on the principle of aggregation of results, which implies that the combination of results achieved at one level (project, country, region) should contribute to the achievement of the expected results at a higher level (programme, HE strategy). These would be development results, based upon the guiding principles and priorities of the HE Strategy and the programme itself.

7.2 Effectiveness

7.2.1 Contract model of programme management

231. ADA should tender a new management contract for Phase 2 of APPEAR as a five-year contract plus a possible one or two-year prolongation based on programme-level results. This would be the minimum term necessary to make adjustments to the maximum project length and enable the restructuring of aspects of the programme (see 7.2.3), and the development of the programme in some key areas (North and South participation, improving the basis for sustainable partnerships etc.).

7.2.2 Programme leadership and management

Steering Committee

232. The current SC needs reorganisation and reconsideration of its role. We recommend the FMEIA and ADA consider and decide on one of the following two options:

1) The current SC is confirmed as a supervisory and steering committee, there to assist ADA in its oversight of the programme. As such it should be chaired by ADA as the sponsor and leader of the APPEAR programme and have binding decision-making powers. In this role:
   - Its terms of reference should be revised and strengthened.
   - It should meet twice in a calendar year.
   - Its current membership should be reviewed and changed to strengthen external expertise in international HE development programme management, representation from South partner institutions, and from the HE and research community in Austria.
2) The current SC is replaced with an Advisory Board, chaired by FMEIA, with the role of providing strategic advice and guidance to ADA on the development, implementation and review of the programme (not the projects). In this role:
   - Its TOR should be completely revised.
   - It should meet at least once a year.
   - Its current membership should be reviewed and changed to strengthen it in the following ways to include:
     - academic expertise, in developing and implementing HE partnership projects and programmes with South partners (i.e. at least one experienced, practising academic with a track record in coordinating international joint research projects. Ideally this would be two members, one from another European university

and one from a South university, both participating in bilateral development programmes.

- expertise in the programme's specific thematic focus areas.

Selection Board

233. In Phase 2, the SB should become an instrument of the programme management and as such should be convened and chaired by the contracted programme manager (currently OeAD/LAI) and not by ADA, though ADA would continue to have at least two members on the Board to represent its interests in project selection. ADA should change the TOR for the management contract accordingly and new TOR for the SB should be prepared by the new contractor.

ADA responsibilities

234. FMEIA and ADA should ensure that the role of ADA, as the leader of the programme, is clearly defined in the TOR and Contract for Phase 2 of the programme, particularly in relation to the role of the SC if this is retained (see paragraph 232). ADA's role should broadly be:

- To give leadership and strategic direction (see Annex 4) to and oversee the implementation of the APPEAR programme, supporting and monitoring overall progress at a programme level.
- To ensure that the necessary resources are available to the contracted programme manager throughout the implementation process and to accept ultimate responsibility for the successful implementation of the management contract according to its defined TOR.

Programme manager responsibilities

235. The contracted programme manager (currently OeAD/LAI) should remain responsible for managing and implementing the programme, monitoring and supervising all procedures and ensuring the successful implementation of all funded projects. ADA should ensure that the TOR of the Phase 2 contract defines these responsibilities in greater detail than the current TOR.

7.2.3 Programme structure and parameters

Structure

236. The following structural changes should be considered and implemented by ADA through the TOR for the management contract of Phase 2 of APPEAR. Revised guidelines for the programme should be prepared by the new contractor:

Components 1 and 2

237. Project partnership and scholarship components should no longer be separate. In Phase 2 all scholarships should be embedded in or overtly linked to funded partnership projects. We recommend that no free-standing scholarship component should be retained.

238. Proposed project plans should include costed PhD and/or Master's scholarships, even if suitable candidates cannot be identified until the partnership project has been up and running for a period. To accommodate the selection of suitable candidates throughout a project partnership period, a proportion of funds specifically for project-linked scholarships should be earmarked and held back at each Call for proposals.

239. Scholars proposed by project partnerships should be subject to the same rigorous selection criteria and methods as at present, but decisions on acceptability of candidates for funding can and should be made by the programme manager alone, without involving the SB.

Preparatory and full proposals

240. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the APPEAR application process in Phase 2 the preparatory project grants leading to the submission of full project proposals should be replaced by a two-step application process involving:

- A competitive open call issued for partnership project concept notes or letters of intent, based on a defined template.
- Concept notes, no more than eight to ten pages long and including information on the proposed project partners, problem analysis, development context, description of proposed project, assumptions and identified risks, are submitted by the Call deadline and assessed first by the programme managers for formal correctness and then assessed and scored by members of the SB. This assessment process could be done without the need for a SB meeting, with each SB member assigned a proportion of the total, formally correct, letters of intent, avoiding the need for all SB members to read all letters of intent. Concept notes or letter of intent are not peer reviewed.
- A restricted call for the submission of fully-fledged project proposals is issued only to those institutions whose concept notes pass the appropriate score threshold. All invited potential partnerships are offered a preparatory grant to facilitate the preparation of a full proposal on the basis of a simple plan and rationale for how the funds will be spent. These funds should be paid on a non-returnable basis irrespective of whether the institutions go on to complete and submit a full proposal.
- Full proposals are submitted by the Call deadline and these go through the same peer review and assessment by the SB as in Phase 1 of the programme.

Parameters

Eligible countries

241. Consideration by FMEIA and ADA should be given to retaining all originally eligible countries in APPEAR, regardless of whether the country or region is still an ADC priority for other non-educational areas of Austrian cooperation.

Thematic constraints

242. Consideration by FMEIA and ADA should be given to extending the thematic focus of APPEAR to public health subjects (excluding medical doctor education) in which project partnerships and scholarships can build HE institutional and research capacity development.

Timescales

243. The maximum length for an APPEAR partnership project in Phase 2 should be five years.

244. Phase 1 projects now implementing should be given the opportunity to apply for a project extension of up to two years – with or without additional funding. If there are request for additional funding associated with timescale extensions these could be funded from the balance of Phase 1 funding outstanding after the 3rd and final Call for proposals.

Budgetary constraints

245. Allocation of up to 20% of project partnership budgets to non-eligible country partners in regional networks should be allowed.

246. Maximum overhead costs should be increased to 10% in Phase 2 projects.

7.2.4 Application and selection procedures

247. If FMEIA and ADA accept and implement the recommended changes to Phase 2 programme structure and parameters (7.2.3), Phase 2 programme documentation (including Guidelines for Applicants, Guidelines for Reviewers, TOR for the SB) will require revision and amendment by the new contractor to reflect the structural and procedural changes. These revisions should include a clearer definition of all the selection criteria and weightings, including such ADC concerns as achieving geographical balance in the programme and balancing types of institutions or thematic focus. These selection considerations should all be explicit, coherent and transparent in all documentation.

248. SB proceedings should be recorded in greater detail to reflect precisely any decisions taken to override peer reviewers in the selection of accepted projects and the rationale behind the decision.

249. The programme manager and chair of the SB (see 7.2.2) should request the SB to grade selected projects into two categories: 'to be funded' and a reserve list 'to be funded should funds be available'. The programme manager can then ensure that all available project funding is committed, without further reference to the SB, by allocating funds on a priority basis, with acceptable projects in reserve should any priority projects fail to complete partnership negotiations, etc.

7.2.5 Partner identification

250. ADA should consider including in Phase 2 an explicit focus on fostering partnerships with weaker, smaller and less well-resourced South partner institutions.

7.2.6 Communications and information

Communications

251. The current communications and information strategy should be completely revised and strengthened by the new contractor in Phase 2 to include specific indicators and results against which its effective implementation can be assessed. The strategy should include as priorities:

- promoting the relevance of the programme to the FHs
- promoting the opportunities of APPEAR directly in priority countries, including directly to all publicly-funded HE and research institutions (e.g. through contacts established with the institutions international cooperation offices) and to government ministries and departments responsible for HE (who also often have offices of international cooperation).

Information and knowledge base

252. ADA should include in the TOR of the programme management contract for Phase 2 two new specific tasks:

- Set up and maintain a knowledge bank about the key players in HE international cooperation, the parameters and priorities of their programmes, their priority countries and regions, current and ongoing projects and programmes, etc.; and provide appropriate information to potential and existing project partnerships.
- Facilitate 'match making' and contacts between Austrian and South HE institutions by setting up and maintaining an information resource on HE in the ADC South priority countries, including small, less well-known universities and contacts in these institutions.

Support to potential and actual project partners

253. In the remaining two years of Phase 1, OeAD/LAI should increase their offer of highly-regarded workshops on issues of development relevance and partnership building, and concentrate on issues relating to the five basic principles of APPEAR, namely:

- participatory approach
- concept of culturally open-minded knowledge
- practically- and empirically-oriented approach
- gender sensitivity
- 'bottom-up' and demand-driven approach

7.2.7 Strengthening gender aspects

254. Consideration should be given by ADA to revising scholarship grant levels in Phase 2 to include an element to enable family members to accompany scholars, which could encourage more female candidates to apply for and take up scholarship opportunities.

255. ADA should also consider additional measures for supporting women to get scholarship grants, such as by including maternity leave where necessary and allowing them to stay longer in their own country as part of their research programme.

Annex 1. Terms of Reference

Midterm Evaluation of APPEAR – Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research (0894-00/2009) (26 March 2012)

BACKGROUND

APPEAR, the Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development is based on the Strategy "Higher Education and Scientific Cooperation" of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and should implement therein defined principles, specifications and best standards.

APPEAR is a programme to strengthen institutional capacities in higher education, research and management in most of the key regions of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) through partnerships between academic and/or research institutions in these regions and Austrian academic institutions. The objectives are to improve the quality in teaching and research, to make the management and the administration of the institutions involved more effective and to strengthen the scientific dialogue nationally and internationally.

The programme has two components whereby the focus is on the academic partnerships (***first component***). APPEAR funds well-designed collaborative and innovative projects that respond to identified demands in the partner countries and institutions. The participatory approach of the programme means that the project proposal is planned and worked out jointly. In order to improve academic capacities, the partners have to embed a development approach that brings together academic questions with specific needs and demands of the addressed countries in the South. Ownership must be well balanced between the concerned partners. If the proposed activities need more than two partners involved, a partnership network can also be established. Preconditions for equal partnerships are in respect of different methodological and empirical approaches, different epistemological and cultural systems, different modes of interaction and interpretation of results and no interest in one-sided knowledge-transfer. This means that APPEAR follows five basic principles: participatory approach, concept of culturally open-minded knowledge, practically- and empirically-oriented approach, gender-sensitivity, bottom up and demand-driven approach.

All proposed activities within academic partnerships have to be related to one of the following thematic focuses: higher education and research for development, water supply and sanitation, rural development, energy, private sector development, governance and human rights, poverty reduction, environment and natural resources, peace building and conflict prevention, gender equality, strengthening of skills in social sciences as an instrument to systematically analyze the reasons of poverty and to empower capacities in social science research.

The first component (academic partnerships) is closely related to the ***second component*** which should mainly support students and academics from already existing partnerships with the allocation of grants for Master's and PhD programmes in Austria. Selected students and professionals are either involved in existing academic partnerships or will contribute to further establishment of academic partnerships. Both components share the overall objective to strengthen the institutional capacity of the partners in the South.

For the first programme period (2010–2014) three calls for proposals and grant applications are foreseen.

The thematic and geographical focus of the programme is based on political determinates (e.g. Three-Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy). For the current programme period 2010–2014 institutions and applicants of the following countries are eligible: Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Bhutan, Nepal

and the Palestinian Territories.

APPEAR is financed by the Austrian Development Agency and implemented by a consortium of the Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research (OeAD) and the Austrian Latin America Institute (LAI). Strategic advice and feedback are provided by the Steering Committee representing relevant stakeholders on an institutional level. The Selection Board awards funds from components one (preparatory funding, academic partnerships) and component two (Master's and PhD grants). Complete proposals for academic partnerships are assessed and ranked by independent peer reviewers. The programme management team of the consortium (APPEAR team), which is commissioned by the Austrian Development Agency, is in charge of all relevant programme procedures and provides and communicates sufficient information concerning the programme. The Austrian Development Agency steers, monitors and supervises the programme.

The next programme tender procedure by the Austrian Development Agency is foreseen for 2013, the expected start of the second phase at the end of 2014.

PURPOSE / OBJECTIVES
The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the first phase of the program according to the ADA Strategy Higher Education and Scientific Cooperation, the terms of reference of the programme tender and the programme documents (the contracting and programme implementation documents). It is expected that the evaluation will formulate recommendations, lessons learnt and options concerning the second programme phase.

The evaluation will include an analysis of

a) the relevance of the entire programme,
b) the strengths and weakness of the programme structure and programme implementation and
c) the logframe

The target audience and main users of the findings of the evaluation will be the Austrian Development Agency, the present APPEAR bodies, the present implementing programme consortium (OeAD and LAI), potential bidders for the tender of the second programme phase and other interested stakeholders.

SUBJECT AND FOCUS
The evaluation should assess only the programme level itself (meta- and macro level) but not the granted projects (micro level of the programme).

The evaluation has to consider the OECD DAC criteria focussing on relevance and effectiveness. At this stage of the programme implementation (programme started at the beginning of 2010) questions regarding sustainability and impact are not useful.

Some core principles were defined for the programme e.g. gender sensitivity[24]. These are key elements not only for the submitted partnership projects but also for the programme and its implementation. Furthermore, transparency and communication are other crucial points within the programme. Therefore some evaluation questions regarding these points were also formulated.

[24] see Terms of Reference of the programme tender and the relevant programme documents

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Relevance

1.) Is the programme in accordance with international strategies and approaches (e.g. Paris Declaration, Accra Convention, MDGs)2 in relation to

- its goals[25],
- its principles[26],
- its structure and design[27].

2.) Have the principles of the strategy for Higher Education and Scientific Cooperation of the Austrian Development Cooperation been adequately translated in the design and implementation of the programme?

3.) What is the programme's contribution to the visibility of development related issues, research and teaching within the Austrian academic/scientific public?

4.) Does the programme facilitate projects which are in accordance with national development and education strategies of the southern partner countries?

5.) Is there, in the view of the southern project partners, a reciprocal relationship between research/teaching and poverty reduction?

Effectiveness

6.) Does the programme design (procedures and instruments) enable an efficient and effective programme implementation?

7.) Has the programme already achieved intermediate results as defined in the logframe.

8.) Does the chosen way of ADA for the programme execution (externally, by the selected consortia) assure an effective implementation of the programme?

9.) Are the five basic principles of the programme considered in the selection process of the projects?

10.) Do the selection criteria consider the needs and demands of the southern partners?

11.) To which extent is the project selection for all relevant stakeholders (e.g. applicants, Selection Board, Steering Committee and other interested institutions and individuals) transparent, unprejudiced and in accordance with the "Guidelines for Applicants"?[28]

12.) To which extent is the selection process in accordance with usual standards of project assessment from the peer reviewers' point of view?

13.) Is the programme design suitable for the elaboration of project proposal that respond to the needs and demands of the southern partners?

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[25] A. Boeren (Not so close harmony: Cooperation modalities to strengthen higher education and research in developing countries, April 2010) and M. Larsen (Comparative analysis, June 2009)

[26] with special reference to TOR, chapter 3; logical framework matrix, project purpose – component 1, project purpose – component 2 with special reference to TOR, chapter 2; APPEAR program flyer, p. 3; Guidelines for Applicants, chapter 3.1.

[27] with special reference to TOR, chapter 2; APPEAR program flyer, p. 3; Guidelines for Applicants, chapter 3.1.

[28] see e.g. Guidelines f. A., 3.7., 4.4. and 5.5.; TOR, 4.3.2 and 5.3 .

14.) How effective are the defined parameters of the partnership projects (e.g. maximum duration of 3 years, maximum budget of EUR 390.000,-) in order to establish sustainable partnerships, to achieve relevant research and teaching objectives and to develop institutional capacity?[29]

15.) How effective are the defined parameters of the preparatory funding projects (e.g. maximum duration of 6 months, maximum budget of EUR 15,000,-) in order to prepare high quality partnership proposals that are in line with the programme guidelines?

16.) Are there sufficient high quality scholarship applications that are in line with the programme guidelines?

17.) How effectively does component two (PhD and Master grants) support component one (academic partnerships)?

18.) How effective is the practice of common calls for both academic partnerships and scholarships?

19.) How effectively is the strategy for communication, information- and public relations implemented?

20.) How effective is the programme communication/cooperation internally (between ADA and the consortium concerning decision making, steering and supervision of the programme) and externally (e.g. between APPEAR team and applicants, project holders, representatives of universities and/or other stakeholders concerning consultation and guidance, acceptance and refusal of projects)?

21.) To which extent does the Austrian Development Agency fulfil its responsibilities as contractor concerning steering, implementation and monitoring of the programme?

22.) To what extent has the programme been successful in implementing the gender strategy?

Unplanned positive / negative side effects

23.) Has the establishment of the programme influenced/changed the opinion of

- the academic community in Austria
- the representatives of higher education / research institutions in the eligible partner countries
- especially with reference to defined approaches and principles (e.g. participatory approach, partnership, ownership, bottom-up and demand-driven approaches, gender sensitivity, concept of culturally open-mined knowledge, ...) so far?

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team has to base its work on the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and has to document its work in a manner that demonstrates that these criteria have been adhered to.

It is also expected that the recommendations are realistic, concrete and practice oriented towards the next programme phase (tender process should take place 2013; second phase of the programme will start at the end of 2014). Recommendations must be addressed to the relevant stakeholders.

[29] with special reference to TOR, chapters 4.1., 4.2.3., 4.2.2

For data collection different methods are suggested to be used during the two evaluation phases:

- Desk study: Data/literature surveys, analysis of these documents and of documents which will be provided by ADA and/or the consortium
- Qualitative interviews with different stakeholders
- Focus group discussions
- Written questionnaires

First phase of the evaluation:

- Desk study
- Visit in Vienna: First round of interviews and meeting to discuss the TOR
- Focus group discussions
- Draft inception report – submission to ADA

The second phase of the evaluation can only start after the approval of the inception report by ADA.

Second phase of the evaluation:

- If necessary further analysis of documents and literature
- Interviews
- Questionnaires
- Focus group discussions
- Presentation of the draft final report in Vienna in order to discuss its results
- Inclusion of comments into the report
- Final report

The team is expected to interview key stakeholders (depending on the evaluation questions). It is assumed that approximately 30-35 persons will be interviewed

- Representatives of ADA headquarter (Director Programmes and Projects International; Head of Quality Assurance and Knowledge Management who is also member of the Steering Committee; Head of Countries & Regions who is also member of the Selection Board; Desk Officer Education & Science who is responsible for the programme and chair of the Selection Board)
- Representatives of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, FMEIA (Task Manager Education & Science who is also chair of the Steering Committee; Head of Department VII/2)
- Representatives of the consortium (Executive Director of OeAD; Executive Director of LAI; Programme Coordinator; Head of OeAD finance department because of his involvement both in the new programme and in the completed Nord-Süd-Dialog Stipendienprogramm)
- 2 representatives of the Selection Board[30] who are not ADA employees
- 2 representatives of the Steering Committee[31] who are not employees of ADA or FMEIA
- 3 heads of ADC coordination offices in the South (e.g. Ethiopia with three running projects and most of the scholarship holders; Palestine, because of the complex working situation in the field; Bhutan because of no awarded projects)
- Project coordinators of the 11 partnership projects (main coordinators)

Some interviews could be probably organized via focus group discussions e.g.:

- Consortium (everyone involved at OeAD and LAI)

[30] The Selection Board has all in all seven members.
[31] The Steering Committee has all in all seven members.

- Austrian Project Coordinators (main coordinators and sub-coordinators)

Additionally to interviews and FGD it is suggested that questionnaires are pooled for the following target groups e.g.:

- Heads of ADC coordination offices in the South (eligible countries for the programme); clarification of details by phone possible
- Applicants
- Steering Committee; clarification of details by phone possible
- Selection Board; clarification of details by phone possible
- Peer Reviewers
- Project coordinators and sub-coordinators; clarification of details by phone or email possible
- Especially for Southern partners: partners in an APPEAR project and all applicants
- Scientific community in Austria: Österreichische Universitätenkonferenz (UNIKO; Universities Austria), Österreichische Fachhochschulkonferenz (FHK; Austrian Association of Universities of Applied Sciences), centers for development research/studies, international relations offices of universities, etc.

TIME SCHEDULE

Commissioning/contracting procedure		Date
	Tender procedure	April
	Award of contract	May
Inception phase with preparation of the inception report / first phase		
	Briefing of the evaluation team (discussion about TOR in Vienna)	September
	Activities of the first phase	September
	Submission of the inception report	October
	Presentation of inception report	October
	Incorporation of feedback	October
	Approval of the inception report by ADA	October
Preparation of the draft final report / second phase		
	Activities of the second phase	October, November
	Presentation of the draft final report in Vienna	November
	Incorporation of feedback	November
Preparation of the final report		
	Submission of final report	December

EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation requires in-depth knowledge and experience in evaluation of development projects and programmes with a focus on higher education (e.g. universities, transnational academic/scientific partnerships) and/or scientific work/research. Furthermore, experiences in capacity development in the area of higher education and scientific work are an advantage.

It is expected that the evaluation will be carried out by an independent evaluation team with the required qualifications and experience. The number of experts within the team should not exceed three persons. Members of the evaluation team must not have been involved in the design, planning, monitoring or implementing of any components of the entire programme. Members of the evaluation team have to list if she/he has worked for one of the partners within the consortium (OeAD and LAI) or ADA in any other context.

The qualifications of the evaluation team are includes the following:

- experience in evaluation in general (at least five references),
- experience in evaluating projects/programmes on higher education and scientific collaboration (at least two references),
- experience/expertise in development cooperation (at least five years)
- experience/expertise in higher education and scientific work/research
- experience/expertise in capacity development
- fluency in German and English

The qualifications will be proven by CVs and a list of reference projects and activities.

REPORTING

The evaluation team has to provide the following reports

1. Inception report (20 to 25 pages)
2. Draft final report (max. 50 pages, excluding annexes)
3. Final report (max. 50 pages, excluding annexes)
   Executive Summary in German and English

The inception report should contain:

- Presentation of the possible hypotheses/issues regarding the main evaluation questions
- Description of the methodological approach for the second phase of the evaluation including a detailed plan of the next steps, selected interview partners, methodology to collect information and data, processing and analysis of information including data triangulation
- Outline exactly how the final evaluation report will be structured

The findings and recommendations of the draft final report and final report have to be structured according to the evaluation questions. All the reports need to be written in English.

The executive summary should summarize key findings and recommendations (three to five pages) and needs to be submitted as part of the final draft report. The Executive Summary needs to be prepared in English and German.

All reports are to be submitted in electronic form in accordance with the deadlines set in the time-schedule.
The ADA "Guidelines for Project- and Programme Evaluations" need to be taken into consideration www.entwicklung.at/aktivitaeten/evaluierung/, see formats for inception report, evaluation report and others.

The following criteria will be used to judge the quality of the final report and will be decisive for the approval of the final report:

- Have the terms of reference been fulfilled in an adequate manner and is this reflected in the final report?
- Is the final report structured according to the evaluation questions?

- Are the conclusions/recommendations of the report based on findings and clearly described in the report? Can the conclusions/recommendations be logically derived from the findings?
- Does the report clearly differentiate between conclusions, recommendations and lessons learnt?
- Are the recommendations and lessons learnt realistic?
- Is it evident from the report, how and why the evaluators arrive at their conclusions?
- Are the methods and processes of the evaluation sufficiently presented in the evaluation report?
- Is it clear to whom recommendations are addressed?
- Is the executive summary (in both languages) comprehensive in covering all key issues and easily comprehensible?
- Have the most significant stakeholders been consulted?
- Have all key documents been taken into account and adequately presented in the report?
- Does the report present its findings in a reader-friendly and logical manner?
- Is the report free from spelling mistakes and ambiguous formulations?
- Can the report be distributed in the delivered form?

COORDINATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

ADA will commission the evaluation and will be responsible for.

The overall coordination and contact point for this evaluation is the ADA Evaluation Unit. The ADA Education & Science Desk and the programme consortium support the ADA Evaluation Unit.
The terms of reference for this evaluation were elaborated in a participatory manner between ADA and the implementing consortium of the programme (OeAD and LAI).

Contact:
ADA Evaluation Unit: Karin Kohlweg (karin.kohlweg@ada.gv.at)

Annex 2. Persons contacted and consulted

Those marked with an asterix * were contacted but did not respond

FMEIA		
Anton	Mair	Head of Directorate Policy, Strategy and Evaluation
Reinhold	Gruber	Dept VII-2 Development policy and evaluation (and chair of Steering Committee)
ADA		
Robert	Zeiner	Head of Programmes and Projects
Margit	Scherb	Head of Quality Assurance and Knowledge Management (and Steering Committee member)
Ursula	Steller	Head Countries and Regions (and Selection Board member)
Gertraud	Findl	Education and Science Adviser (and chair of Selection Board)
Hubert	Neuwirth	previously Head of ADA Coordination Office Nicaragua
OeAD/LAI		
Andreas	Obrecht	OeAD
Stefanie	Reinberg	LAI
Julia	Julia Lichtkoppler-Moser	OeAD
Elke	Stinnig	OeAD
STEERING COMMITTEE		
Heidi	Esca-Scheuringer	Association of Universities of Applied Sciences
Barbara	Hinterstoisser	UNIKO
Helen	Nakimbugwe	Südliche Institution
Stephan	Neuhäuser	Austrian Ministry of Science and Research
*Hannah	Akuffo	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SELECTION BOARD		
Elisabeth	Schmid	Gender expert
Reinhard	Belocky	FWF
Marie-France	Chevron	Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie
*Gudrun	Lettmayer	Joanneum Research
*Ralf	König	FFG
Others		
Elisabeth	Förg	previously with ADA
Nadine	Shovakar	UNIKO
Arthur	Mettinger	FH Campus Wien
PROJECT COORDINATORS NORTH		
Andreas	Melcher	BOKU
Eva	Klawatsch-Treitl	FH Campus Wien
Aline	Lamien Meda	Veterinärmedizinische Universität Wien
Johannes	Novak	Veterinärmedizinische Universität Wien
Michael	Hauser	BOKU

Helmut	Spitzer	FH Kärnten	
Wolfgang	Benedek	Universität Graz	
Thomas	Grechenig	TU Wien	
Ruth	Kutalek	Medizinische Universität Wien	

PROJECT COORDINATORS SOUTH

Washington	Ochola	RUFORUM	Uganda
Martin	Kiendrebeogo	University of Ouagadougou	Burkina Faso
Daniel	Querol Lipcovich	Universidad Nacional Agraria	Nicaragua
Tri Ratna	Bajracharya	Tribhuvan University	Nepal
Samia	Al-Botmeh	Birzeit University	Palestinian Territories
*Samar	Al Nazer	Birzeit University	Palestinian Territories
Romer	Altamirano	Universidad Centroamericana	Nicaragua

Annex 3. Online survey questionnaires

ADA Coordinators

This is a short survey for heads of the Austrian Development Agency's (ADA) Coordinating Offices about the ADA's APPEAR programme, which is managed by OeAD. The responses are completely anonymous and will feed into the mid-term evaluation of the programme.

1. Does your Coordinating Office have regional responsibilities? Yes/No
2. If yes, how many countries in your region?
3. How many staff do you have in your Coordinating Office? Write in number
4. Do any staff have specific responsibility for higher education? Yes/No
5. When the APPEAR programme was being designed by ADA and OeAD in 2009/2010, were you invited to comment on any draft documents or make any contribution to the design of the programme from the country or regional perspective? Yes/No/ Can't remember
6. In the APPEAR programme first phase 2010-2014 the following numbers of project proposals with partners in these countries were accepted into the selection process:

Burkina Faso	4
Ethiopia	16
Ethiopia & Uganda	1
Kenya & Ethiopia	4
Mozambique	3
Mozambique & Uganda	1
Uganda	7
Uganda & Kenya	2
Uganda & Kenya & Tanzania & Rwanda	1
Bhutan	3
Bhutan & Nepal	2
Palestinian Territories	5

7. Were you asked for feedback about these projects by ADA HQ or OeAD? Yes/No/Can't remember
8. Were you (or your staff in the Coordinating Office) able to review and provide feedback on all the project proposals from your designated country or region? Yes/ No/ can't remember
9. If no, what prevented you (or your staff) from providing detailed feedback:
    a. Not sent the information on the project proposals in time to respond
    b. Lack of staff capacity/too many other conflicting responsibilities
    c. Other? Please write in
10. What kind of feedback on the proposals were you asked to provide? Please tick relevant items
    a. To what extent the proposal(s) matched the national development and poverty reduction policies/strategies/priorities
    b. To what extent the proposal(s) were in line with the national strategy for higher education
    c. Comments on the status, capacity and specialisms of the proposed partner university
    d. Information about other development partner funding or programmes for higher education development from which the proposed partner was benefiting
    e. Other information? Please specify
11. If you did provide feedback did you get any response from ADA or the Selection Board? (Yes/No)

12. Have you been asked by any applicant(s) to support their application for project funding in any way? Please tick all that apply
    a. To assist them in identifying appropriate university partners for their project idea either in Austria or in the South country or region?
    b. To contribute your country or regional know-how to the preparation of their proposal?
    c. To check their project proposal and comment before it was sent in?
    d. Other? Please write in

Thank you very much for completing this short survey. If you have any questions about the mid-term evaluation of the programme or about Education for Change Ltd. please contact Julie Carpenter at j.carpenter@efc.co.uk

UNIKO Vize-Rektoren Umfrage auf Deutsch

Dies ist eine kurze Umfrage für Vize-Rektoren österreichischer Universitäten über das APPEAR Programm der *Austrian Development Agency* (ADA), das vom OeAD verwaltet und umgesetzt wird. Die Antworten sind völlig anonym und werden in die Zwischenevaluation des APPEAR Programms eingehen.

1. Das APPEAR Programm läuft nun seit zwei Jahren mit 17 geförderten Partnerschaftsprojekten und 45 neuen Master- und Doktorandenstipendien. In wie weit stimmen Sie mit den folgenden Aussagen zu oder lehnen sie ab? Bitte antworten Sie mit der für Sie treffendsten Antwort. (stimme voll zu, stimme zu, stimme nicht zu, stimme keinesfalls zu)
    a) Der neue Ansatz von APPEAR, Forschung und akademische Partnerschaften aufzubauen, die den Schwerpunkt haben für die Südpartner Kapazitäten zu entwickeln, ist ein sehr positiver Schritt nach vorne.
    b) APPEAR eröffnet oder wird eine gute Gelegenheit eröffnen, die internationalen Aktivitäten unserer Universität auszuweiten.
    c) APPEAR eröffnet oder wird eine gute Gelegenheit eröffnen, die entwicklungspolitisch bezogenen Aktivitäten unserer Universität auszuweiten.
    d) Die von APPEAR gesetzten geographischen Prioritäten (qualifizierende Länder und Regionen) passen nur bedingt in die Internationalisierungstrategie unserer Universität.
    e) Das von APPEAR unterstützte Themenspektrum (qualifizierender Forschungs- und Themenfocus) repräsentiert das Fächerspektrum unserer Universität nur sehr dürftig.
    f) Die APPEAR Stipendien sind wegen ihrer thematischen und zeitlichen Einschränkung wenig hilfreich für unsere Universität.
    g) Bei einigen Fachbereichen unserer Universität sind die relevanten entwicklungspolitische Anforderungen nicht wirklich verstanden worden und ihnen ist nur schwer gerecht zu werden.
    h) Das Einhalten der fünf APPEAR Basisprinzipien ist eine große Herausforderung für unsere Akademiker, die einen Projektantrag vorbereiten. Die fünf Prinzipien sind: Einbeziehen der Partner in die Entscheidungsfindung, Eigentümerschaft, bottom-up und nachfrageorientierte Ansätze, Gender Sensibilität, ein Konzept der kulturell offenen Wissenserzeugung.
    i) Unsere Universität muss erst noch gute akademische und forschungsbezogene Beziehungen in den sich für APPEAR qualifizierenden Ländern aufbauen, um sich an dem Programm beteiligen zu können.
2. Die Vorbereitung der zweiten Phase von APPEAR bietet die Gelegenheit die Parameter und das Design des Programms zu verändern. In wie weit stimmen Sie zu oder lehnen Sie es ab, dass fol-

gende Aspekte von ADA für die zweite Phase berücksichtigt werden sollten? Bitte antworten Sie mit der für Sie treffendsten Antwort. (stimme voll zu, stimme zu, stimme nicht zu, stimme keinesfalls zu)

a) APPEAR Stipendien (Master und Ph.D.) sollen voll in Partnerschaftsprojekte integriert werden und sollten eher den Anforderungen der Projekte entsprechen als durch Spracherwerb oder eine projektfremde Themenwahl beeinträchtigt zu werden.

b) APPEAR Stipendien sollten nicht nur Bewerbern aus qualifizierten, Südprojekte koordinierenden Partnerinstitutionen offen stehen, sondern auch Bewerbern aus am Projekt beteiligten, in regionalen Netzwerken organisierten Institutionen, (die nicht zu den geographischen Schwerpunkten APPEARs zählen)

c) APPEAR Partnerschaftsprojekte wären effizienter, wenn sie länger als die bisher festgelegte Förderzeit von maximalen drei Jahren dauern könnten.

d) Auch wenn sich die geographischen Prioritäten der Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) geändert haben, gibt es gute Gründe, die geographische Qualifikation für die Förderung durch APPEAR nicht noch weiter einzuschränken, sondern alle in der ersten Phase des Programms qualifizierten Ländern in die zweite Phase als Qualifikanten zu übernehmen.

e) Das Bewerbungsverfahren für APPEAR Projekte könnte stromlinienförmiger und weniger aufwendig gestaltet werden, wenn eine „Vorantrag“ Runde eingeführt würde. In diesem „Vorantrag“ gilt es die Projektidee und die Struktur der vorgeschlagenen Partnerschaft kurz darzustellen. Aus dem Eingang der „Voranträge“ würde eine Vorauswahl getroffen und ein beschränkter Kreis an Bewerbern aufgefordert werden, einen vollen Projektantrag auszuarbeiten und für die Förderentscheidung einzureichen.

f) Würde eine Stärkung der Netzwerke durch die Einbeziehung von Ländern, die sich nicht für eine Teilnahme an APPEAR qualifizieren, die Wahrscheinlichkeit eines Antrags aus Ihrer Institution erhöhen?

3. Gibt es noch weitere Kommentare zum APPEAR Programm, die Sie gerne zur Zwischenevaluation beitragen würden? Wenn ja, schreiben Sie diese bitte in nachstehendes Textfeld.

Herzlichen Dank für die Beantwortung dieser kurzen Umfrage. Sollten Sie weitere Fragen haben, wenden Sie sich bitte an Wedigo de Vivanco wedigo@devivanco.de .

FHK Vize-Rektoren Umfrage auf Deutsch

Dies ist eine kurze Umfrage für Vize-Rektoren österreichischer Fachhochschulen über das APPEAR Programm der *Austrian Development Agency* (ADA), das vom OeAD verwaltet und umgesetzt wird. Die Antworten sind völlig anonym und werden in die Zwischenevaluation des APPEAR Programms eingehen.

1. Das APPEAR Programm läuft nun seit zwei Jahren mit 17 geförderten Partnerschaftsprojekten und 45 neuen Master- und Doktorandenstipendien. In wie weit stimmen Sie den folgenden Aussagen zu oder lehnen sie ab? Bitte antworten Sie mit der für Sie treffendsten Antwort. (*stimme voll zu, stimme zu, stimme nicht zu, stimme keinesfalls zu, weiss nicht*)
   a) Der neue Ansatz von APPEAR, Forschung und akademische Partnerschaften aufzubauen, die den Schwerpunkt haben für die Südpartner Kapazitäten zu entwickeln, ist ein sehr positiver Schritt nach vorne.
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Herzlichen Dank für die Beantwortung dieser kurzen Umfrage. Sollten Sie weitere Fragen haben, wenden Sie sich bitte an Wedigo de Vivanco wedigo@devivanco.de .

Peer reviewers survey

1. How many APPEAR project proposals have you reviewed to date?
Please write in the number below

2. Have you ever had to decline the request to review due to other work commitments? Yes/ No

3. Do you get asked to review APPEAR projects because of:

a) your thematic area of experience?

b) your knowledge or experience of the geographical region or specific country?

c) both of these?

4. On average how much time in total does it take you to complete the review and scoring of one full APPEAR project proposal?

a) Under 1 day

b) 1 – 2 days

c) 2 – 3 days

d) More than 3 days

5. Do you normally try to do the review and scoring as one continuous task or do you work on it over a period of time, returning to the work on separate occasions?

a) One continuous task

b) Done over a period

6. Given your typical workload, how many weeks do you need from the date of receipt of the APPEAR project proposal(s) and application papers to the date of your return of the completed review(s)?

a) 1 – 2 weeks

b) 2 – 3 weeks

c) 3 – 4 weeks

d) More than 4 weeks

7. When you review an APPEAR project proposal, how are you able to judge the suitability of the planned activities and timetable in line with the local, institutional and scientific needs and demands in the South country? Please tick any that apply

a) I usually do or am prepared to do additional research (e.g. background on country or institution)

b) I am usually very familiar with the local and developmental circumstances in the South country in the proposals I have reviewed

c) I rely on the rationale and description of activities in the project proposal itself to make my judgement

d) Other (please specify)

8. In the Guidelines for Reviewers, which of the 5 major criteria for assessment of APPEAR project proposals do you find the most challenging to assess? Please rank these in order - 5 = most challenging - 1 not challenging at all

a) Project design and substantive quality

b) Project management and capacity of the consortium

c) Relevance for and contribution to development

d) Results and sustainability

e) Cost effectiveness

9. In the APPEAR project proposals there are 'required areas' which the applicants must complete satisfactorily; which of the following required areas have you found to be the greatest weaknesses in the project proposals you have reviewed? Please rate the following in order of greatest weakness - 7 = very weak - 1 = not weak at all

a) Demand-driven approach: The proposed activities are based on institutional and societal needs in the southern country.

b) Relevance of the partnership and relevance of the Master's and PhD thesis for development in the partner country

c) Preference of partnerships and Master's and PhD grants which demonstrate a relation to the thematic focus of the respective region or country of the ADC

d) Gender is systematically integrated in the project plan.

e) Professional expertise and stated interest in relation to the thematic focus and the capacity development activities of the partnership

f) Participatory approaches and well-balanced ownership between the partners

g) Result-orientation and sustainability

10. Have you reviewed other joint research and academic project proposals with development objectives or in a development context (e.g. other bilateral higher education for development programmes, EU programmes)? Yes / No

11. How do the APPEAR selection procedures compare with these others in your view?

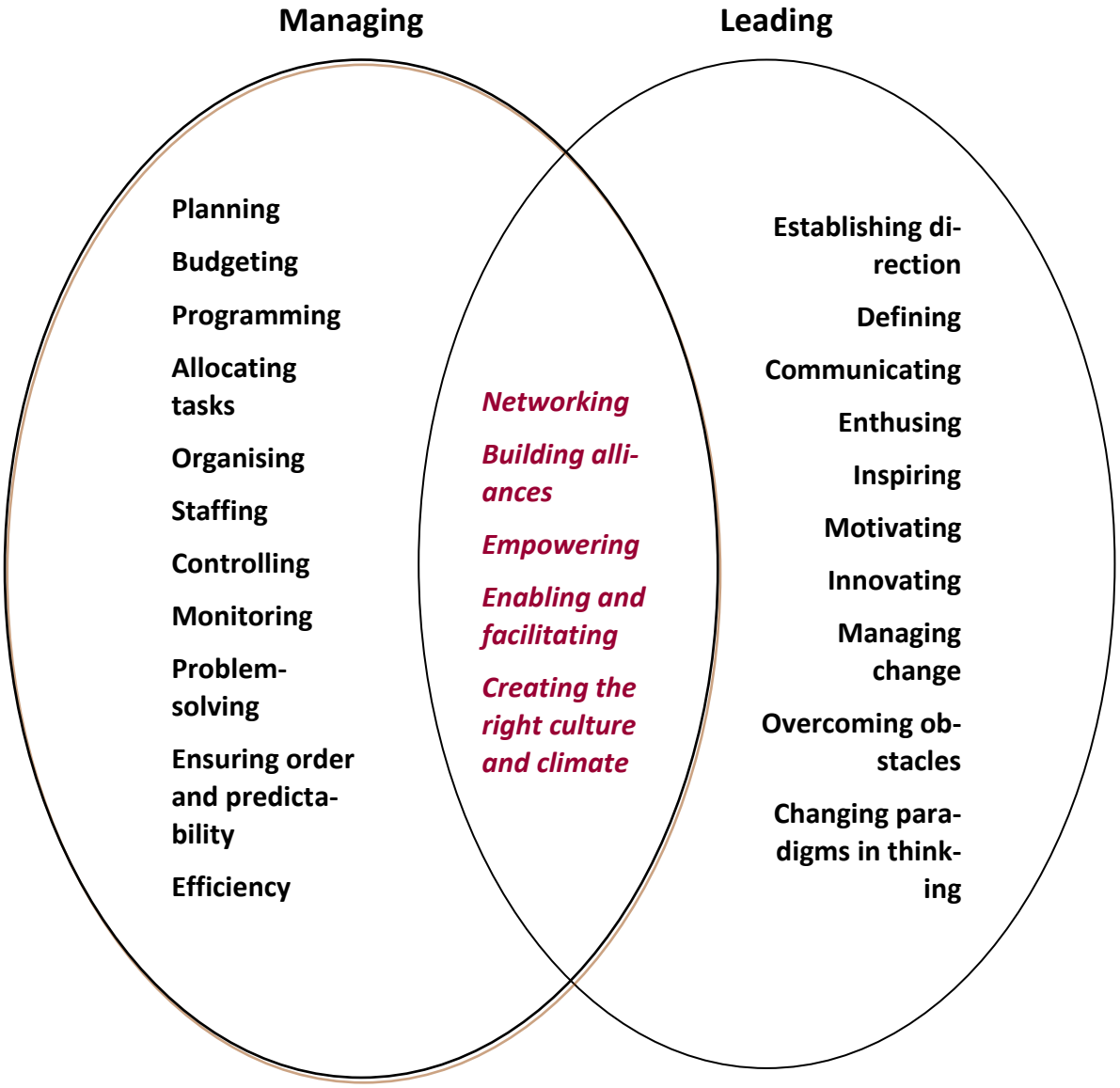
more rigorous/tough

less rigorous/tough

12. Also in comparison with other bilateral higher education for development programmes or EU programmes, have you found the guidelines and assessment procedures from APPEAR to be:

a) clearer and more straightforward than other programmes (i.e. language and concepts against which you are assessing the proposal, your role and responsibilities)?

b) less clear and straightforward than other programmes?

c) about the same as other programmes?

Annex 4. Examples of management and leadership responsibilities