

Support to Quality Monitoring Systems and Methodologies
of Projects and Programmes of External Assistance

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SPECIAL REPORTS produced by ROM contractors in the period 2005 to 2011

Final Report

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	Operator	EC Consultant
Name:	AIDCO / B1	GFA-IDOM Consortium
Address:	Rue de la Loi 41 1000 Brussels Belgium	Eulenkrugstrasse 82 D-22359 Hamburg Germany
Tel. number:	+32 (0)2 2981449	+49 40 603 06-170
Fax number:		+49 (0)40 603 06-179
E-mail:	Thierry.dudermel@ec.europa.eu	Karin.mueller@gfa-group.de
Contact person:	Thierry Dudermel Head of Section ROM	Karin Mueller GFA Backstopper

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Author of report: Ms. Ruth Kaeppler, Senior expert
Ms. Véronique Lena, Team Leader
Ms. Lucile Petitpierre, Junior Expert
Ms Katja Albrecht, Junior Expert

Table of Contents

Abbreviations.....	3
Introduction.....	4
1 Special Reports Produced up to 2011	6
1.1 Types of Special Reports.....	6
1.2 Overview of Types of Special reports by Region	7
1.2.1 LOT 1 - ENPI.....	7
1.2.2 LOT 2 - ACP.....	8
1.2.3 LOT 3 - Asia and the Central Asia Region	8
1.2.4 LOT 4 - Latin America	8
1.2.5 LOT 5 - CMTP.....	9
1.2.6 LOT 6 - WBT.....	10
2 The initiators and users of Special reports.....	11
2.1 Who is requesting the preparation of a Special reports	11
2.2 Who is using the Special reports?	11
3 Availability of ToRs and budgets for Special reports	13
3.1 Availability of TORs.....	13
3.2 Budgets for Special reports	13
4 Methodologies used for the elaboration of Special reports	14
4.1 Sampling methods.....	14
4.1.1 Country Special reports	14
4.1.2 Multi-country programmes Special reports	15
4.1.3 Thematic Special reports.....	15
4.2 Criteria for analysis.....	15
5 The potential use of Special reports	16
6 Key findings.....	19
6.1 Strengths.....	19
6.2 Weaknesses	19
7 Recommendations.....	21

Tables

Table 1. Financial instruments of European Union (EU) external aid	4
Table 2. Number of Special Reports per lot	6
Table 3. Number of Special reports per type	7
Table 4. Number of Special reports by type of reports for ENPI	8
Table 5. Number of Special reports by type of reports for Latin America	9
Table 6. Number of Special reports by type of reports for CMTP	9
Table 7. Number of Special reports by type of reports for WBT	10

ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	Africa, Caribbean and Pacific
ALA	Asia and Latin America
BCS	Background Conclusion Sheet
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DG	Directorate General
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
HQ	Headquarter
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEDA	Mediterranean partner countries
MR	Monitoring report
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
ROM	Results-oriented Monitoring
SR	Special Reports
TA	Technical Assistance
TACIS	Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States
TM	Task Manager
ToR	Terms of Reference
WBT	Western Balkans and Turkey

INTRODUCTION

Harmonized “Results-oriented Monitoring” (ROM) of European Commission (EC) external cooperation was first established in the period 1999-2001 through a single contract with global coverage. The official launching of the ROM system with different lots per region started in 2001/2002 (depending on the lot). Lots include: Asia and Latin America (ALA), Mediterranean partner countries (MEDA), Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) and the Balkans in 2000. As of 2002, the responsibility for coordination of the Monitoring System was transferred to the different Geographical Units of EuropeAid. The Directorate General (DG) Enlargement uses the same ROM methodology for interventions financed in the Western Balkans and Turkey (WBT) (for regional projects). Table 1 presents each of these programmes.

Table 1. *Financial instruments of European Union (EU) external aid*

For the 2000–2006 budgetary period	
CARDS	The CARDS was established on 5 December 2000 through Council regulation Number 2666/2000. Its scope is the Western Balkans countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia). The programme's wider objective is to support those nations in the Stabilisation and Association Process.
TACIS	The TACIS programme, established in 1991, was a programme of technical assistance that supports the process of transition to market economies for the 11 Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries and Georgia. Until 2003, Mongolia was also included in the programme but is now covered by the ALA programme.
MEDA	The MEDA programme was the principal financial instrument for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, offering technical and financial support measures to accompany the reform of economic and social structures in the Mediterranean partner countries. The first MEDA programme was established for the period of 1995-1999. On November 2000, a new regulation established MEDA II for the period of 2000–2006.
ACP	The programme applies to 71 countries, among which are all African nations with the exception of the Mediterranean countries of Northern Africa (covered by the MEDA programme above). The ACP is currently covered by the Cotonou Agreement, which replaces the Lomé Convention.
ALA	ALA is a programme for financial aid and cooperation with those regions.
For the 2007-2013 budgetary period	
ENPI	ENPI is a financial instrument that covers the ENP countries. Russia is also covered by ENPI. ENPI therefore merges the former MEDA (as all of its current beneficiaries are ENP states) and the European part of the former TACIS structure.

Note: There are also some other financial instruments, which are subject to ROM by the various lots during the period of reference, such as: Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), Instrument for Stability (IfS), and ad hoc Food facility (FF).

For the period 2005-2011 the EU signed 21 distinct contracts, which provide ROM services under different Lots.

As described in the ROM Handbook, ROM is based on a standardized methodology for all types of EU intervention. It is undertaken by a team of independent experts. The results of ROM missions are presented in a concise standard report containing reviews of the situation at the time of the mission following the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of relevance/quality of design, efficiency, effectiveness, impact prospects and potential sustainability. It is a “snapshot” of the current status of an EU intervention at a given moment.

Activities of the ROM contractors are followed up by the ROM Task Manager (TM), as liaison person in EuropeAid or DG Enlargement, who is responsible for the execution of one of the five current ROM service contracts. Main tasks of the ROM TM are: coordination of the annual Work Plan and

the sample of eligible projects for monitoring for the Lot; day-by-day operation of the ROM service contract; including coordination with other ROM Lots and ROM coordination to further uniformity in application of the system; validation of the planning of missions and communication with the EU Delegations (EUDs); quality control of outputs under ROM in each lot.

ROM serves however not only as a tool for day-to-day project management by informing stakeholders about the performance of a specific project, but it may also contribute to general EuropeAid programming, implementation and review. If aggregated and analyzed, it can be utilised by different stakeholders (ROM desk officers, EUD, ROM contractors etc).

Up to today a large number of ROM outputs has been produced (up to 2011, some 2000 ROM outputs were delivered to the EU). The information collected provides a significant amount of comparable information. Thus, based on the experience accumulated since 2003, **the EC asked the ROM contractors frequently to produce “Special Reports (SR)” for the EUDs and/or the geographical coordinators and/or thematic units.** Anyhow it has to be underlined that a SR is not a ROM output per se, but the analysis and/or summary of a group of ROM outputs. This group can be defined by topic, by sector, by geographic area or by a programme. There exist considerable differences in the number and type of SR prepared by the ROM contractors.

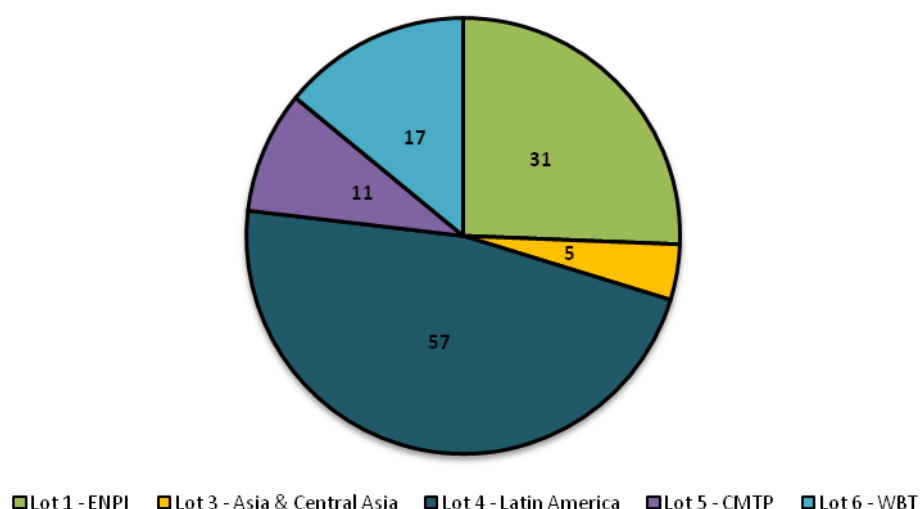
The objective of this assignment is to identify the different SR prepared during the period 2005 – 2011 by the different ROM contractors and to strike a balance of the pertinence and global quality of the SRs produced. As a first step, SRs for the different geographical lots have first been compiled. Subsequently, the methodology used, the budget required and their global added value have been analysed.

A specific difficulty of the assignment was that several of the ROM contractors working in the period 2005 until 2010 are not present in Brussels anymore. Consequently, as there is no systematic storage of these documents, there is a high probability that there exist additional reports which are not yet included in the tables presented in this report.

1 SPECIAL REPORTS PRODUCED UP TO 2011

During the period 2005-2011, 21 ROM service contracts have been implemented.¹ A total number of 121 SRs has been identified. Table 2 presents the number of SR by lots. For the lot ACP no SR have been produced (or have been made available). The approach towards SR varies from one ROM contractor to the other.

Table 2. Number of Special Reports per lot



1.1 Types of Special Reports

The ROM contractors produced different types of SR such as an in-depth focus on selected individual projects monitored, aggregated overviews on monitoring results at country or regional level etc. You will find the main types of outputs that are produced under this assignment described below.

The Special reports identified can be subdivided in four main types of reports:

Multi-country programme SRs (13 reports) deal with the information about an intervention with regional coverage, e.g. EUROMED, SMAP, EUROSOLAR, and ALINVEST. They aggregate the information of monitoring reports/exercises undertaken at country level. Furthermore, additional information may be collected with EC Headquarter (HQ), Technical Assistance (TA) providers and other relevant stakeholders.

Country SRs (59 reports) are reports that provide a synthesis of monitored EU funded projects in a country. They usually look at all interventions monitored during a calendar year. However, in a few cases also results of monitoring undertaken during a period longer or shorter than one year were used for the preparation of a country Special report.

Thematic/Sector SRs (43 reports) aggregate the information of the interventions in a specific sector (e.g. local development) or of a specific theme (migration, health, and environment, social cohesion)

¹ You can find an overview of the ROM contractors by lot and region in the Annex 1.

at the country or regional level. Some of the thematic reports comprise a summary of lessons learnt and examples of good or bad performance in a specific thematic area.

Other SRs (6 reports) Ecorys has analysed how monitored projects contribute to the achievement of MDGs in a specific country or region (Study on MDG 1 - ROM Asia 2010 final, Study on MDG 6 - ROM Asia 2010 – final, Study on MDG 7 - ROM Asia 2010 – final). It has also issued a “Lessons learned compendium 2010 – final”. A draft analysis of Council of Europe monitoring reports EU Funded National Projects in Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) Monitored in the Period 2009 – 2010 has been issued by ICCS-NTUA (Lot ROM WBT).

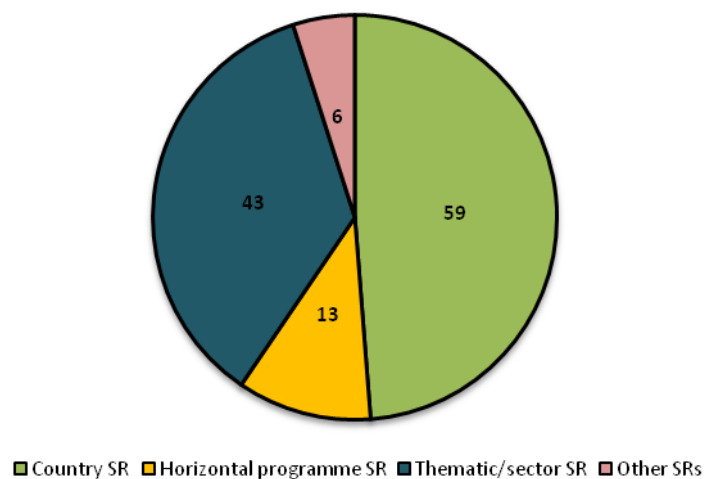
The list of SR by Type of reports is available in Annex 2.

1.2 Overview of Types of Special reports by Region

The number and type of reports prepared during the reference period by the ROM contractors varied considerably in number and in characteristics of SR.

The list of SRs by Lot and region is available in Annex 3.

Table 3. *Number of Special reports per type*

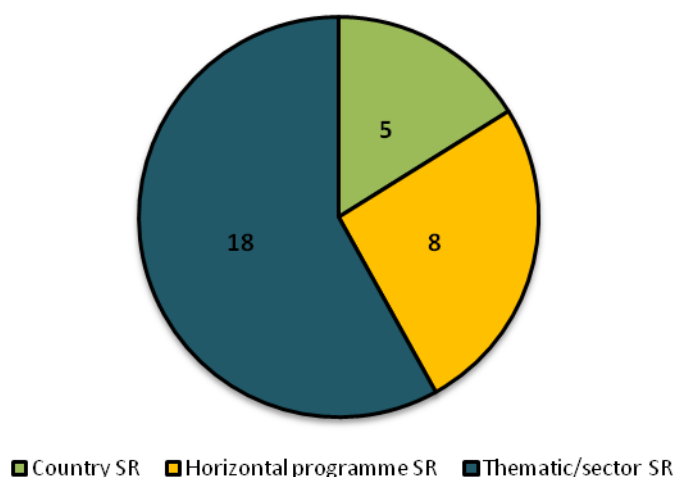


1.2.1 LOT 1 - ENPI

Of the 31 SRs prepared under lot 1, 18 were thematic/sector SRs. They included, for example the Public Administration Reform projects, the TACIS Nuclear Safety projects, Regional Development Projects or the Integrated Border Management, Migration and Asylum projects in Ukraine. Country reports were prepared in 2005 for Moldova and Ukraine.

Synthesis reports were prepared for the horizontal interventions: EUROMED HERITAGE Programmes, the EUROMED WATER Programme, the SMAP programmes, the Migration Projects (AENEAS 2004) and the Programme for Enhancing Opportunities for Women in Economic Life (EOWEL).

Table 4. *Number of Special reports by type of reports for ENPI*



1.2.2 LOT 2 - ACP

No Special reports have been produced or been made available.

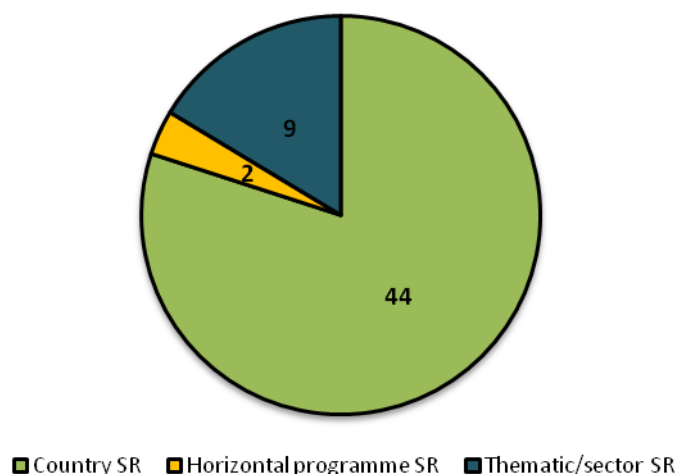
1.2.3 LOT 3 - Asia and the Central Asia Region

For the Asia and Central Asia region during the reference period (2005-2011), five special reports were produced. Two of the SR identified present the lessons learnt from all monitoring exercises undertaken during a calendar year, the other three verify the possible relation and contribution of EC projects monitored to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). No Country SR's and no Multi-country programmes SR's have been produced.

1.2.4 LOT 4 - Latin America

Latin America is the region where the highest quantity of reports were produced; mainly due to the introduction of systematic country SRs: Out of 57 reports, 42 **Country SRs** were produced from 2005 to 2011. They are a summary of all interventions monitored during a year. Only the 2009 report for Nicaragua stretched over a longer time period, comparing monitoring results for the periods 2007-2009. Annual monitoring reports have been produced for Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru-CAN (See Annex 2 for further details).

Table 5. Number of Special reports by type of reports for Latin America



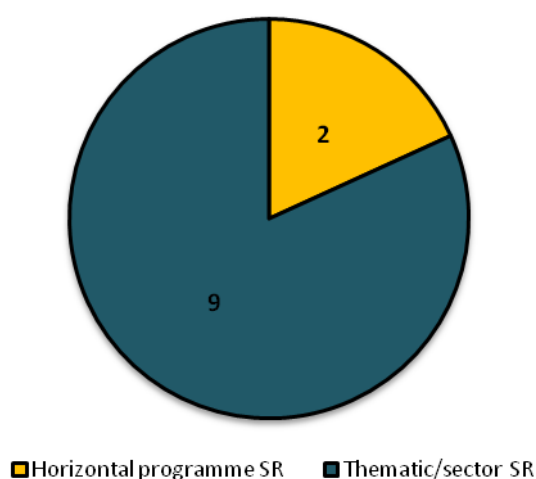
Further to the **Country Special reports**, three SR on **Multi-country programmes** were produced: ALINVEST, EUROSOLAR and ERASMUS MUNDUS.

Thematic reports give an overview of the findings of thematic interventions or lessons learnt. Eight thematic SR have been drafted between 2005 and 2008 on the following theme/sector: Gender, environment, health sector support, cooperation via NGOs, human rights, employment, trade and regional integration, as well as the EC contribution to social cohesion in Latin America.

1.2.5 LOT 5 - CMTP

SRs are Thematic or Sector based. Theme/sector covered in 2011 include non-state actors and local authorities, human rights, migration and the environment. Multi-country programmes SR were prepared on the Food Security Thematic Programme and the Food Facility (2011), the Energy Initiative Partnership Dialogue Facility (2010) and the “Investing in People” Programme (2011).

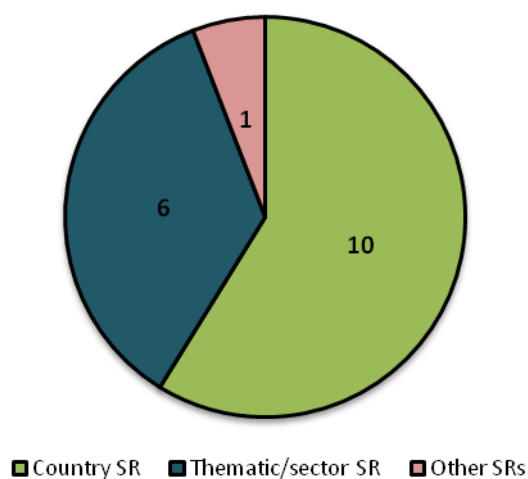
Table 6. Number of Special reports by type of reports for CMTP



1.2.6 LOT 6 - WBT

The majority of SR's are country reports. Out of a total of 17 reports, 10 Country SRs have been drafted. They are annual synthesis on EU National Projects funded in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia and in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Thematic/Sector SRs touch upon Tourism, Regional Development Agencies; they also include Subsector reviews of the Public Administration Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Table 7. *Number of Special reports by type of reports for WBT*



2 THE INITIATORS AND USERS OF SPECIAL REPORTS

2.1 Who is requesting the preparation of a Special reports

To analyse the origin of demand and distribution, two sources of information have been used: the SRs and interviews with ROM contractors.

It appears that the SRs are mainly requested by the EC HQ (ROM TM) and EUDs.

Lot 1 - ENPI: Most reports (in particular Country SRs), were requested by EUDs.

Lot 3 – Asia & Central Asia: the SRs have been agreed between the ROM TM and the ROM contractors. The provision of SRs is included in the contract. The reports on “Lessons Learnt” are part of the annual reporting of the ROM contractor.

Lot 4 - Latin America: the decision to prepare a report was the result of a permanent dialogue between the ROM TM and the ROM contractor. EUDs define together with the TM the opportunity to draft a Country SR. In this case, the preparation of the SR was included in the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the monitoring mission, itself. Multi-country programmes SRs were asked by the ROM TM.

LOT 5 - CMTP: SRs are elaborated by the ROM contractor as part of its annual and final reporting, following previous endorsement and approval of the ROM task manager.

LOT 6 – WBT: Some SRs were initiated by ROM TMs, however most of the SRs were requested by EUDs.

The preparation of SRs is getting more systematic. ROM contractors used to propose a certain number of SRs in their technical offer without any additional costs to the EC. In the last tender for ROM (period 2011- 2013) ROM contractors were requested to provide SRs.

2.2 Who is using the Special reports?

It is difficult to define exactly to what extent the SRs have been used and by whom, as they most often do not indicate to whom they have been distributed. Interviews with ROM contractors revealed that Thematic/Sector SR's have been used in the first place by HQ, whilst EUDs were mainly interested in Country SRs. The Multi-country programmes SRs in the ENPI region were mainly used by geographic Units. It is not possible to state if SR's have been disseminated to main external stakeholders and implementing partners.

- ✖ Country SRs and Thematic SRs under Lot 1-ENPI and Lot 6 - WBT were distributed to the ROM TM's. Country SRs were also used by EUDs.
- ✖ The Thematic SRs prepared under Lot 4 – Latin America were distributed to the TMs (in charge of the topic) in ex-AIDCO. Country SRs were used by the ROM TM and the EUDs in the region.
- ✖ The Thematic SRs prepared under Lot 5 - CMTP were used by ex-AIDCO thematic units F1 (Relations with civil society, central management of thematic budget lines NSA-LA under DCI and coordination), F2 (Central management of thematic budget lines under EIDHR and IfS), F3 (Central management of thematic budget lines under DCI and Facility for rapid response to soaring food prices in developing countries) ,E5 (Quality of Delivery Systems), as well as new units after restructuring within Directorates C and D.
- ✖ Country SRs and Multi-country programmes SRs were used by EUDs in the region, European Commission Liaison Office (ECLO) or DG ELARG D3.

Theoretically all SRs should be available at ROM TM's level or at DEVCO B1 level, but it is not the case. Moreover it is to be underlined that not all ROM contractors have handed over reports and

information to their successors in a systematic way. The information presented in the Annex 4 is the result of interviews and data provided by ROM contractors. There may however be further users which are not known to the ROM contractors.

3 AVAILABILITY OF TORS AND BUDGETS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS

3.1 Availability of TORS

In the first years of ROM the preparation of TORS for SRs was not frequent. The recently concluded contracts include the provision of several SRs. The TORS indicate that SRs are to be produced upon special request of EC HQ or EUDs, who will present Terms of Reference to the contractor.

Country SRs are most of the time proposed to EUD's when the ROM mission is prepared. In the case of SRs prepared as an initiative of the ROM contractor in the context of their annual or final reporting, no specific TORS are drafted.

3.2 Budgets for Special reports

The consultant has tried to estimate costs, based on the information provided by ROM contractors. The preparation of SRs did not involve major expenditures. In most the cases, SRs have been prepared at a very low cost or at no-cost by the ROM Contractors.

In former years ROM contractors proposed in their technical officer the provision of a certain number of SRs without any additional costs. In these cases, SRs were prepared by the permanent staff of the ROM contractors, so it is difficult to evaluate the exact budget.

Under **Lot 1 - ENPI**, the current contractor included the provision of some SRs without additional cost. What concerns the past contractors, the elaboration of the SR was partly covered through the man days available under the ROM contract. Permanent staff of ROM contractors significantly contributed in the elaboration of the studies without any additional costs.

Lot 3 – Asia & Central Asia: The contractor prepared in 2010 three studies on MDGs 1, 6 and 7; using 10 man days for each study. Two reports, titled "Lessons learned compendium" in 2009 and 2010 were drafted by the contractor as an annex to the contractual reporting.

Lot 4 - Latin America: Country SRs were included in the TOR of the mission. Country SRs were usually prepared by the Team Leader of the monitoring mission. For the preparation of the report the cost varied between 1500€ and 6000 €. The cost of Thematic SRs undertaken in the Latin American region in the period 2005 – 2006 had a cost between 2000€ and 4000€. The two studies undertaken in 2009, cost between 8000€ and 9000€ (see Annex 5).

Lot 5 - CMTP: SRs drafted in 2010 are annexed to the Contractor's final report. They are produced without additional cost.

Equally, the core monitoring team of the contractor under **Lot 6 - WBT** prepared Country and Thematic SRs without any additional cost on demand of the EU Delegations and the ROM Task Manager.

Data have been provided by the ROM Contractors. In some cases it was not yet possible to obtain detailed information because the consortium had changed and it was not feasible to access the contracts and TORS.

4 METHODOLOGIES USED FOR THE ELABORATION OF SPECIAL REPORTS

Although the ROM methodology for single external aid operations has been well studied and tested, comparatively little effort has been dedicated so far to the question of **how to aggregate ROM results and interpret them**. Some overall aggregate data are produced every year by all ROM Lots in order to feed the production of EuropeAid Annual Report with basic statistics. More specific analyses are carried out by each contractor on specific request, but **no standard guidelines exist** on how to aggregate and interpret ROM data.

4.1 Sampling methods

SRs are always using the information collected during the ROM exercises at project level. Thus, the sample of the SRs depends necessarily on the methodology used and the number of projects monitored during the reference period (in a specific country, region, budget-line, thematic etc).

According to the ROM methodology the following general criteria apply for the selection of ongoing projects/programmes to be included in a monitoring exercise:

- ✖ Projects/programmes which at the time of monitoring, have been operational for at least 6 months and have 6 months of implementation outstanding.
- ✖ Projects should have an EC financial contribution of more than € 1 million. In addition, a small sample of projects with an EC contribution of less than € 1 million should be monitored (around 10% of the projects monitored).
- ✖ For centrally managed thematic operations other budget levels are guiding the selection: 60% of the operations monitored in this lot should have an EC contribution of more than € 1 million, 30% between € 500.000 and € 1 million, and 10% between €300.000 and € 500.000.
- ✖ Furthermore, according to the ROM Handbook it is possible to include a certain number of other projects agreed upon between the ROM Task Manager – the ROM Contractor and the EUD in the country.

Due to these requirements set by the EC, the composition of the sample of projects monitored in a country is changing from one year to the other. As a result, the number of monitoring reports considered varies considerably from one country to another and from one SR to another.

4.1.1 Country Special reports

No statistical assessments were carried out in order to define the projects/ interventions to be considered in the SR. The sample usually consisted of the total number of projects monitored during a reference period in a country or a region.

Country Special reports indicate in some cases that the sample considered (the projects which have been monitored) corresponded to a certain percentage of the number of projects under implementation. This information is not always useful, as it is difficult to compare interventions of different sizes, implementation channels and budget lines. However – at least in the Latin American

Region- Country SRs covered frequently a significant share of the cooperation under implementation.²

As a consequence of the increase of Budget Support operations in the Latin American Region, for example, in recent years the sample of projects monitored was more and more composed of interventions implemented by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the average size of intervention was decreasing.

4.1.2 Multi-country programmes Special reports

Multi-country programmes SRs have been drafted in several countries. A horizontal programme is an intervention developed with the same objective in different countries. In that case, ROM does not always cover all projects being implemented but a reasonable sample of them. The selection of the projects to be monitored is normally done by the ROM contractor in consultation with the ROM TM.

In the case of the three Latin America multi-country programmes, the monitoring exercise was carried out by several teams in parallel. Thus, the SR is adding information to the Monitoring reports (MR) and the Background Conclusion Sheets (BCS) done at the level of a standalone intervention (part of an horizontal programme).

4.1.3 Thematic Special reports

Thematic Special reports: Neither a comprehensive analysis nor a statistical assessment was conducted in order to define the projects/interventions to be monitored. The sample corresponded in most cases to an aggregation and synthesis of the results of projects belonging to the same “theme” monitored during a reference period. Specific thematic reports consider all the projects/interventions related to the thematic and monitored during the reference period. Depending on the thematic and the number of projects monitored the thematic special reports may cover a significant population of projects or not. Thus findings cannot be generalised, but show trends only.

Thematic Special reports elaborated by services providers in charge of a geographic region, aggregate only data related to this region (not world-wide).

4.2 Criteria for analysis

Country SRs, Multi-country programmes and Thematic SRs mainly look at the standard parameters of relevance/quality of design, efficiency, effectiveness, impact prospects and potential sustainability.

Country SRs and Thematic SRs include the recent developments in the country context (at the economic level for instant) or a more in-depth assessment of the sector/theme, in order to benchmark ROM outputs towards context data. They provide a summary of the projects monitored according to the DAC criteria; they interpret the reasons for good or bad performance, provide lessons learnt and formulate recommendations.

² Monitoring results of Budget Support interventions is generally not covered in Country Reports. Thus, reports of countries with BS interventions are frequently covering only a little share of the overall cooperation.

5 THE POTENTIAL USE OF SPECIAL REPORTS

MRs have a real potential for “lessons learnt”, producing knowledge on EU cooperation derived from past and ongoing experiences. The volume, distribution and frequency of observations on the projects’ performance derived from ROM outputs are recorded and analysed by ROM contractors. A high proportion of EC cooperation initiatives (programs, projects, etc) are, as a matter of fact, ROMed several times during and after their lifetime. On the one hand, this potential for provision of information is not fully exploited. On the other hand, the conclusions of such reports must be carefully used, because of method limitations inherent to ROM.

The possibilities of processing information from ROM data encompass several potentially useful outputs:

- ✖ Describing the characteristics and actual performance of a cooperation portfolio sample in comparison to planned outcomes at a given moment;
- ✖ Identifying good practices and common issues with incidence on performance;
- ✖ Verifying the actual contribution of a group of projects to a specific policy;
- ✖ Observing the performance trends of a group of projects over a selected period with successive monitoring;
- ✖ Conducting an in-depth analysis of the performance of a group of projects.

Lessons learned and experiences collected in ROM, and extracted from ROM through qualitative studies presented in SRs could feed into strategic planning and the ex-ante assessments of projects through the Quality Support Groups.

Country SRs provide information concerning the performance of a coherent group of interventions, giving an overview of their performance.

- ✖ They are a very useful instrument for evaluations. Combined with the knowledge of the EUD staff related to the projects and their representatives at country level, they can be a good tool for evaluators in order to have a quick snapshot of the state of the art of a sector, theme, country...
- ✖ New staff in the EUD can get an overview about projects and their performance, SR can be useful in the case of handover.
- ✖ Furthermore, SRs may be useful for the preparation of the Country Strategy Paper (CSP), as it has happened in ENPI countries or at least,
- ✖ as an entry point for discussion with national Governments on the projects’ performance.
- ✖ Equally, it can be an indicator for EC Services at HQ to assess difficulties in one country or region. Due to the decentralization of many projects, TM’s at central level are less involved in day to day management. .

Multi-country programmes SR’s

- ✖ Are interesting for EC task managers at HQ level and to EUDs to get an overview of the performance of the programme in other countries. The same for implementing institutions giving them the possibility to draw lessons on reasons for good or bad performance.
- ✖ For the same reasons, **Thematic SRs** are useful for EC services at HQ level, in particular the thematic units, and evaluators. Their added value is the presentation of a tendency of the performance of projects in a given sector.

- ✖ At the same time, they allow comparisons of projects implemented through different channels or one financial instrument. They have nevertheless to be regarded critically ***as in many cases the samples are not representative.***

SRs on **cross-cutting issues** and **horizontal issues** could be of high importance to the EU in the context of the **European Consensus on Development**, and the reform of Technical Assistance. BCS and MRs should be the key sources for information.

The “**gender policy marker**” helps to characterize a project towards gender equality. Equivalent measures for environmental, governance and human rights aspects of projects could be similarly developed in the BCS. Such an approach combined with a simple analysis of frequency would ease the possibility of scoring a large number of MRs towards the four main types of cross-cutting issues.

The following table presents a list of the type of the aggregated information which is available and can be used for the preparation of SRs.

Table 8: Summary table on information available and obtainable from ROM and its potential use

<p><u>Data available from ROM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project data (including DAC code, DAC sector, project authority, implementing partner etc.). • Project execution data (Start date – planned, actual; End date planned-likely, visit of the monitors, financial data etc...) • Descriptive information from MRs • Information from RS
<p><u>Type of information obtainable</u></p> <p>Using statistical processing of the encoded data it is possible to obtain a huge volume of information concerning performance analysis. Several variables can be analyzed simultaneously showing thus performance trends.</p> <p>Examples of obtainable information includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the geographical coverage, • Financial volume according to region, sector, implementing partner • Performance according to region, sector, implementing partner (or different variables such as region and sector and partner); thus monitoring can tell us for example whether social projects in LA have better performance if implemented by Government, IOs, international or national NGOs • Development of performance during lifetime (monitoring can show us whether projects which have been scored low at the beginning of their implementation have the tendency to improve – broken down by sector, region, implementing partner etc) • Correlation between sub- scores (e.g. projects which have a low score in BCS 1.1. (Relevance) may have a higher probability in achieving a low score in 5.2. (ownership). • Correlation between answers related to horizontal issues and project performance • Correlation between answers related to cross-cutting issues and sustainability (BCS 6)

Possible use of the available information:

- Can permit to compare the actual performance of a cooperation portfolio sample in comparison to planned outcomes at a given moment; this can permit to introduce corrections in time, if necessary
- Can/should be taken in consideration by DEU staff and QSG during project formulation and design
- Can be used for periodical review of cooperation performance per sector, country, region
- Can be used as a basis for decision making concerning certain implementation channels (international and national NGOs, different UN organizations, sector ministries of beneficiary countries etc)
- Can be an input for formulation of CSP; as it permits to verify the actual contribution of a group of projects (implemented in the past or under implementation) to a particular policy;
- Can be an input for the design of specific instruments of EU cooperation;
- Can help to adapt cooperation projects to evolving contexts,
- Can help to identify good practices and common issues with incidence on performance;

6 KEY FINDINGS

6.1 Strengths

SRs can cover a synthesis and analysis of ROM results aggregated by region, country, or sector. There are three main types of SRs: Country SRs, Multi-country programmes SRs and thematic SRs. They may be related to a country, a thematic portfolio, a regional programme or a budget line. In the past SR focused mostly on the geographical and thematic viewpoints.

Due to the way ROM is structured and systematised across regions and interventions, it is possible to analyse a series of parameters included in the BCS.

The elaboration of SRs is useful to compare monitoring exercises over a certain period, location or type of interventions. Comparing, adding up or extrapolating average trends is useful in view of observing global results and/or capitalizing on experience. Results of SRs can be a valuable input for evaluation studies.

6.2 Weaknesses

The quality of a SR is limited by the quality of the information it analyses. **The limits** of the SRs are linked to the nature of the ROM exercise. This means the overall weaknesses of ROM SR are a consequence of the structural aspects of the ROM methodology.

The analysis of **Country SRs** concentrates on comparing the overall results of a sample of projects towards the CSP priorities and national challenges. However, as the number of projects to be analysed can be rather low, a single project may significantly influence the overall performance of the group of projects being analysed. Moreover the group of projects which have been ROMed is not necessarily representative of the portfolio, due to the criteria of eligibility and selection of projects to be ROMed (mostly only projects with a budget of above EUR 1 Million are ROMed, but more than 50% of project have a budget of less than EUR 1 Million). Actually, at this moment we don't know whether the portfolio of ROMed projects is representative or not, or whether, for example, smaller projects perform better.

SRs are useful as an indicator for the performance of projects in a country, region, and sector or over time, but do not necessarily draw conclusions on Results which can be aggregated and attributed at national and/or sector level. As ROM is a review of how a project is progressing in terms of resource use, implementation, and delivery of results and the management of risks, it only captures a snapshot of the situation of the project at the moment of monitoring.

Quality of ROM (and consequently of ROM SR) depends on the capacity of the ROM expert to highlight and understand the relevant issues and features of an intervention, and on the overall quality of the process. ROM outputs are also necessarily very short on context. Furthermore, it is difficult to make a reliable statement regarding impact prospects and potential sustainability at the early stages of a project. ROM findings in this regard necessarily tend to be an estimate, rather than based on evidence.

ROM missions are short and thus it is not possible to embark on a resource intensive, in-depth analysis of a project or programme. Thus, it is not possible to make adequate and substantive conclusions about EuropeAid's development cooperation based on ROM and the respective

SRs. However, SRs do provide information about project trends identified in successful and less successful projects in a country, region or thematic.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Preparation and planning: In order to draw the maximum of benefits from SR it is essential to draft clear Terms of Reference which set the scope of the study, determining the basic expected outcomes. It would be recommended that a single task manager for example from DEVCO Unit B would be nominated to coordinate and follow up all SRs prepared by ROM contractors. EU Delegations and units at HQ level interested in obtaining a SR have to coordinate with this task manager and propose the elaboration of the SR on the basis of a draft template (to be elaborated). From these TORs, the contractor would have to derive his understanding of the task, including the research questions, the sampling method, the sources of information and the methodology. Furthermore, it is important to understand the scope of such a study, the strengths and limits of ROM as a source for aggregate analysis in order to decide whether it is the right tool for the purpose.

The preparation of SRs (especially thematic and sector SRs) should be **part of the annual planning of the ROM exercises**. ROM experts and the ROM TMs should make joint planning exercise on the basis of the envisaged ROM portfolio for the year. It is evident that not all SR can be included in the annual planning, as specific information needs of a unit or EUD may arise. Short Ad-hoc Monitoring Notes are not considered in this planning and will be prepared additionally on demand.

Knowing ex-ante which SR will have to be prepared will help the ROM Team to organize the ROM missions in such a way that sufficient information related to the specific information needs for the SR will be available. Furthermore, mission members can be asked to have a specific look on certain aspects and/or to collect additional information.

In the case of Multi-country programmes SR's which cover projects implemented in several regions (e.g. the ERASMUS Programme) it would be recommended to undertake the SR in parallel in several regions and to use the same methodology in order to permit aggregation and comparison of results. The same observation is valid for thematic reports.

Thus the elaboration of thematic reports (e.g. Health, environment, UN organizations) should be undertaken simultaneously by different ROM contractors for the different geographical regions.

Format of SRs: It would be useful to have a standardized table (similar to a Project Synopsis) in the first page of every report indicating the overall project population in a country, region and theme (number and value) and the sample (no. of projects per budget line, % of cooperation per budget line, % of NIP or of commitments considered). This way, it would be possible to determine whether a sample is representative or not (weaknesses in the sampling of the projects to be monitored affects directly the results of the SR).

Distribution: Assure a systematic distribution of reports by putting them in the web-page related to ROM of EuropeAid (as it is done for evaluation reports). Furthermore, reports should be systematically sent to potentially interested and well identified stakeholders.