



Evaluation of the European Union's regional co-operation with Asia

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*The opinions expressed in this document represent the authors' points of view
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Evaluation of the European Union's regional co-operation with Asia Final Report

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Volume II: Detailed information matrix

Volume III: Annexes

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4. Answers to the Evaluation Questions
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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AADMER	ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Responses
AATIP	ASEAN Air Transport Integration Project
ACD	ASEAN Cosmetics Directive
ACDD	ASEAN Customs Declaration Document
ACDM	ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management
ACTFA	ASEAN-China Free Trade Area
ACTS	ASEAN Customs Transit System
ACU	ASEAN Cyber University
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
AEGDM	ASEAN Expert Group on Disaster Management
AEMM	ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting
AENEAS	Programme for financial and technical assistance to third countries in the area of migration and asylum
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Agreement
AHIF	Avian and Human Influenza Facility
AHTN	ASEAN Harmonised Tariff Nomenclature
AIF	Asian Investment Facility
AIMO	ASEAN Integration Monitoring Office
ALA	Asia-Latin America
AMS	ASEAN Member States
APRIS	ASEAN Project for Regional Integration Support
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ARISE	ASEAN Regional Integration Support
ASB	Arbeiter - Samariter-Bund (German aid and welfare organisation)
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEANStats	ASEAN Statistical Unit
ASEC	ASEAN Secretariat
ASEF	Asia-Europe Foundation
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
ATIGA	ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement
AUP	Aid to Uprooted People
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AWGIPC	ASEAN Working Group on Intellectual Property Co-operation
BM	Border Management
BOMNAF	Border Management for Northern Afghanistan
CEPT	Common Effective Preferential Tariff
CLE	Country-Level Evaluation
CLMV	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam
CRED	Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters
CRIS	Common RELEX Information System
CSCP	Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCI	Development Co-operation Instrument
DF	Dialogue Facility
DG DEVCO	Directorate General Development and Co-operation
DMC	Disaster Management Centre
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency
EAMPMB	EU-ASEAN Migration and Border Management Programme
EAMR	External Assistance Management Report
EASCAB	EU-ASEAN Statistical Capacity-Building Programme
EC	European Commission
ECAP	EU-ASEAN Project on the Protection of Intellectual Property Rights

ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
ECW	External Co-operation Window
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EEE	Electrical and Electronic Equipment
EEERR	ASEAN Harmonised Electrical and Electronics Equipment Regulatory Regime
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights
EM	Erasmus Mundus
EMJD	Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorates
EMMC	Erasmus Mundus Masters Course
ENRTP	EU's thematic programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy
ENVforum	Asia-Europe Environment Forum
EPU	Economic Planning Unit
EQ	Evaluation Question
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESRT	Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism capacity development programme
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
EUTR	EU Timber Regulation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FSP	Food Security Programme
FSTP	Food Security Thematic Programme
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHS	ASEAN's UN Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (the German agency for international co-operation)
HDI	Human Development Index
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
HPED	Highly Pathogenic Emerging Disease
HQ	Headquarters
HS	Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IFS	Instrument for Stability
IL	Intervention Logic
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMTS	International Merchandise Trade Statistics
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
ITSY	International Trade Statistics Yearbook
JC	Judgement Criteria
JCC	Joint Co-operation Committee
LDC	Least Developed Country
LLDC	Landlocked Developing Countries
LPI	Logistics Performance Index
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MIP	Multi-annual Indicative Programming

MR	Monitoring Report
MS	Member State
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MUTRAP	Multilateral Trade Project
NF	Network Facility
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIP	National Indicative Programme
NREN	National Research and Education Network
NSA	Non-State Actors
NSA-LA	Non-State Actors–Latin America
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health (Office International des Epizooties)
PDR	People's Democratic Republic
PMC	Post-Ministerial Conferences
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PSC	Policy Support Component
READI	Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument
RG	Reference Group
RNA	Ribonucleic Acid
ROM	Results-Oriented monitoring
RoO	Rules of Origin
RSE	Regional Strategy Evaluation
RSP	Regional Strategy Paper
RTD	Research and Technology Development
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SGBV	Sexual and Other Forms of Gender-Based Violence
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards
SWITCH-Asia	EU-funded Asia Programme to promote Sustainable Consumption and Production
TA	Technical Assistance
TBT	Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade
TEIN	Trans-Eurasia Information Network
TG	Target Group
ToR	Terms of Reference
TRA	Trade-Related Assistance
TREATI	Trans-Regional EU-ASEAN Trade Initiative
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Education Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VET	Vocational and Educational Training
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreements
WHO	World Health Organisation
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

Executive Summary

Objectives of the evaluation

The “Evaluation of the European Union’s regional co-operation with Asia – Regional Level Evaluation” was commissioned by the DG DEVCO Evaluation Unit and was implemented between January 2013 and November 2013. Covering the period 2007-2012, the evaluation’s objectives were:

- To provide the relevant external co-operation services of the European Union (EU) and the wider public with an overall independent assessment of the EU’s past and current co-operation relations with Asia;
- To identify key lessons and recommendations in order to improve the current and future EU strategies, programmes and actions.

The following points were assessed:

- The relevance and coherence of the EU’s co-operation strategies (all instruments included) for the period 2007-2012;
- The consistency between programming and implementation for the same period;
- The implementation of the EU’s co-operation, focusing on impact, sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency for the period under analysis – and on intended effects for the next programming cycle, 2014-2020;
- The value added of the EU’s interventions (at both strategic and implementation level);
- The 3Cs: co-ordination and complementarity of the EU’s interventions with other donors’ interventions (focusing on EU Member States); and coherence between the EU’s interventions in the field of development co-operation and other EU policies that are likely to affect the region.

Context of the evaluation

Asia is diverse in population, languages, ethnic groups, religions, traditions and cultures. The region accounts for more than half of the world’s population, a quarter of the economic wealth created every year, and is home to the

second and third largest economies in the world (China and Japan), with another economy (India) in the top 10. While Japan and Singapore are among the 20 richest economies in the world in terms of nominal per capita income, countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Cambodia and North Korea remain among the poorest, with a GDP per capita of less than USD 1,000.

Although Asia as a whole has made some significant progress towards meeting the MDGs – with six countries among the 20 top performers worldwide up to 2011 – poverty is still a major problem, as the region is home to two thirds of the world’s poor.

The RSP 2007-2013 covered the three Asian sub-regions South Asia, Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia but excludes the Middle East and Central Asia for which different strategies exist. The RSP was mainly directed towards 19 “eligible countries” as beneficiaries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar/Burma, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. However, in line with DCI rules, other Asian states, for example Singapore and Japan, also participated in programmes implemented as part of the strategy.

Methodological approach

The methodology applied for this evaluation is based on the methodological guidelines developed by the DG DEVCO Evaluation Unit. It was conducted in **four main phases**: inception, desk, field, and synthesis.

The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach to data and information collection, consisting of document review, semi-structured interviews and direct observation, as well as a web-survey of the EU Delegations in the 19 “eligible countries”. Numerous documents (such as EU policies and guiding documents, ROM reports, reviews, evaluations, project documentation) were consulted, and nearly 300 interviews and group discussions were conducted. The team conducted field visits to nine countries that were selected for in-depth research as an illustrative sample for the areas of co-operation covered under the RSP: regional integration (in economic and non-economic fields) and policy dialogues; envi-

ronment, energy and climate change; higher education; and aid to uprooted people.

Conclusions

Conclusions are grouped into two clusters: Relevance, strategic focus and co-ordination; and outcomes. The conclusions are as follows:

Cluster 1: Relevance, strategic focus and co-ordination

Conclusion 1: Overall relevance of the EU-Asia Strategy

While the vast majority of individual programmes and projects under the RSP have been highly relevant to the needs of Asian partner countries, the strategy as a whole failed to develop a coherent regional approach.

There is little doubt that regional-level programmes have completed and strengthened national programmes, and thereby increased the relevance of the EU-Asia development co-operation portfolio as a whole. This applies across all thematic sectors of the strategy. The evaluation looked in detail at hundreds of individual interventions, and relevance emerged as an issue for concern in only a very small number of cases. However, it was noted that most regional interventions would have had the same degree of relevance without being integrated into a regional strategy. There was little attempt to develop individual bilateral or sub-regional programmes into Asia-wide approaches in sectors where this could have strengthened the relevance of the strategy as a whole. For example, although the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) were clustered together under the pillar support to regional economic integration, EU co-operation with the respective organisations continued in a separated and parallel manner. It did not try to link interventions for the benefit of the partner organisations, which face similar challenges. Likewise, the Aid to Uprooted People (AUP) programme has never emerged as a regionally-based or active programme, despite the fact that many of the problems associated with uprooting are inherently regional.

Conclusion 2: Level of ownership

Most interventions under the RSP are characterised by a high level of national and regional ownership, and this has contributed to the effectiveness of implementation. However, donor dependence is a matter of concern.

The degree of ownership in the implementation of strategies varies across sectors and individual programmes. It is strongest in fields where Asian partners have developed a sense of urgency and have also built suitable capacities in addressing existing challenges. While the correlation between the level of ownership and the effectiveness of an intervention is unsurprising, the more important finding is that such ownership deficits were not anticipated in the process of drafting the RSP. Where a good degree of ownership exists, it is mainly in relation to the design and conceptual dimension of an intervention, but not to its funding. The commitment of Asian partners to contribute financially to the implementation of programmes and projects under the RSP has been low. Given the growing number of Asian countries graduating from DCI assistance, the existing donor dependence of bilateral and regional partners across all sectors of the strategy should be a concern. It is to be questioned why regional co-operation agendas – including trade-related matters, disaster management and health, which rank high on the list of strategic priorities of many increasingly better-off Asian states – should be fully funded by external donors.

Conclusion 3: Stakeholder participation

The participation of non-government stakeholders in the design and especially the implementation of programmes and projects has clearly grown during the duration of the RSP. However, this does not yet extend to a systematic and institutionalised involvement of civil society across all major fields of the co-operation programme.

While some consultation with state and non-state stakeholder groups took place in the process of drafting the RSP, Asian partners did not participate directly in the design of the RSP as such. However, programmes and projects implemented under the strategy involved a broad spectrum of stakeholders and, even more important, often brought different stakeholder groups together. For example, a key feature of SWITCH-Asia, the EU-funded Asia Programme to promote Sustainable Consumption and Production, is its focus of working with the private sector. The programme has thereby opened up a new target group and network for EU co-operation.

Conclusion 4: Co-ordination, coherence & complementarity

The conclusion is three-fold. First, co-ordination between regional-level and bilateral interventions has substantially increased. Second, the RSP is coherent with

the EU's external policies, DCI-thematic programmes and other financing instruments, but the EU has failed to explicitly place the strategy within the broader context of these instruments. Third, EU and Member States support is generally complementary, but possible synergies are underused as complementarity efforts do not extend to joint design or joint financing of interventions.

While co-ordination – but not complementarity – between regional-level and bilateral interventions was a problem and challenge, particularly during the early years of the RSP, co-ordination markedly improved during the later phase. Furthermore, EU interventions are generally complementary to the support of Member States. No cases of conflicting or contradictory approaches were found. However, joint needs analyses, or even joint financing, are still a rare exception. The programmes in all sectors of the strategy are generally coherent with the EU's external policies in the fields of education, environment, health, trade, and non-traditional security. There are no glaring mismatches. There are also no inconsistencies or incoherencies between the RSP and the DCI thematic programmes and other instruments. However, the EU could have done more to create explicit links between the strategy and the respective thematic programmes and instruments.

Cluster 2: Outcomes

Conclusion 5: Alignment of development co-operation and policy dialogues

Development co-operation and inter-regional policy dialogues, as the two main strategic approaches towards Asia, have mutually reinforced each other and increased the EU's leverage on key agendas.

It is a particular strength of the RSP that it is based on development co-operation and policy dialogues as mutually reinforcing pillars. The cross-linkages between the co-operation programme and institutionalised high-level political relations have increased the EU's and Asian partners' ability to respond more effectively to emerging challenges in political, economic, social and environmental fields. This applies within the contexts of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) inter-regional forum and the EU-ASEAN dialogue mechanisms, but also at the bilateral level with individual Asian governments. However, the evaluation also noted several instances of policy dialogues in which high-level Asian representation was not matched by the same degree of seniority on

the EU side. This has had repercussions for EU-Asia relations

Conclusion 6: EU contribution to policies and development practises

Programmes and projects implemented under the RSP have had some success in contributing to new or revised national policy frameworks and innovative practises among key stakeholders in core thematic areas. However, challenges remain to deliver more tangible outcomes.

Clear evidence of EU contribution to changed policy frameworks and practises is available in the fields of regional integration, environment, and education. However, in the case of education, these effects have been highly localised. There is, then, considerable scope for leveraging impacts on teaching quality and research capacity at the national level. As for AUP, cross-border aspects of uprooting have been dealt with by – in some cases – previously reluctant national partners. However, there is need for closer cross-border consultation and programme co-ordination.

Conclusion 7: Effectiveness of regional approaches in addressing core development needs

Regional approaches have addressed core development needs – particularly with regard to socio-economic agendas – to different degrees. This applies to all areas of intervention. The examples at the opposite ends of the spectrum are environment (positive) and higher education (negative), with health somewhere in between the two.

All three regional programmes addressing the environment, energy and climate change – SWITCH-Asia, the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade programme (FLEGT-Asia) and the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) – have had a specific focus on some of the most pressing development needs related to core socio-economic challenges and to needs at national and local levels. In contrast, regional-level higher education (HE) programmes on their own are poorly equipped to address, let alone redress, local development needs and specific patterns of socio-economic disadvantage. In health, regional co-operation has helped to strengthen networks and has contributed to capacity building, but the level of cross-border co-operation between human and animal health experts needs to be strengthened further.

Recommendations

The following recommendations, which emerge from the conclusions, are presented in two clusters (enhancing the value added of the regional strategy, and increasing outcomes of sectoral efforts) and are in order of their priority.

Cluster 1: Enhancing the added value of the regional strategy

Recommendation 1: Strengthening region-wide approaches

Strengthen the integration of all interventions – either exclusively directed towards Asia or which have an Asia component – into the regional strategy. In this process, more thought should be given to the value added of the regional approach.

It is not always possible to compartmentalise regional problems into neat boxes corresponding to ASEAN and SAARC. Therefore, three-way communication among the EU, ASEAN and SAARC should be encouraged for issues of common concern that call for approaches covering more than just one sub-region. The Rohingya humanitarian crisis affecting the Muslim minority community in Myanmar and the control of infectious disease are two examples, as are matters of regional integration in economic and non-economic fields in general. In addition to which, they involve both South-east Asian and South Asian countries. The EU should consider building a working group, comprising EU, ASEAN and SAARC representatives, to discuss options for triangular co-operation. Such approaches already exist in other regional contexts – for example, with regard to EU-Africa relations where co-operation in selected thematic areas includes more than one regional organisation.

Recommendation 2: Increasing ownership

Consider expanding the direct participation of regional stakeholders in the design of the strategy and programmes under the RSP.

During the period evaluated, there was no formal mechanism in place for consultations with Asian partners on the design of the RSP. There are at least two feasible approaches to the strengthening of participatory elements in the design of future strategies. First, Delegations could be asked to organise country seminars, comprising key state and civil society partners. Results from these meetings and discussions would then be synthesised in Brussels and fed into the process of drafting the

strategy. Second, and alternatively, the European Commission could use its recent approach to EU-Africa relations as a model, and organise a series of seminars on the future relationship between the EU and Asia. The first of the EU-Africa seminars took place in December 2013 and was attended by 50 representatives from 50 states.

The strengthening of participatory elements in the conception of thematic programmes should also be considered. FLEGT-Asia would be a suitable programme to pilot this approach.

Recommendation 3: Encouraging burden-sharing

Asian partners, particularly the governments of non-DCI countries, should be encouraged to accept financial burden-sharing for regional-level interventions that are in their own strategic or economic interest. There is a clear necessity to reduce donor dependence in this field.

The most striking example is ASEAN. There is no aspect of the proposed ASEAN Economic Community 2015 that is not supported by donor-funding. The same applies to other initiatives with a regional dimension – such as border management, control of Highly Pathogenic Emerging Diseases (HPEDs), refugees and migration, disaster management and environmental challenges – that represent policy priorities for practically all middle income and high income countries in Asia. The EU should consider taking the lead in creating a working group – comprising key ASEAN stakeholders, relevant EU Member States and other donors – to address the commitment of ASEAN member states to fund the regional integration process. The approach to ASEAN could serve as the test case and a model for a reduction of donor dependence in other areas of the RSP. The EU should therefore initiate such talks, which should in the first instance involve the European Union Delegation (EUD) in Jakarta and the ASEAN Secretariat.

Recommendation 4: Creating synergies

Consider the strengthening of synergies between the regional strategy on the one hand and thematic programmes under DCI and other financing instruments on the other.

To strengthen the relevance of the regional strategy and to highlight its specific added value to the EU's development co-operation programme, and to external relations in general, it needs to be more explicitly and firmly embedded within the overall framework of thematic programmes and financing instruments. It is

also necessary that thematic programmes and financing instruments other than DCI demonstrate more clearly how and where they interact with the regional strategy. Better co-ordination between the EU and member states to increase European visibility – and thereby leverage – in Asia is an additional important aspect related to synergies. The European External Action Service (EEAS) and member states should put more effort into co-ordinating the European representation in policy dialogues, with the objective of avoiding diplomatic set-backs in the future and ensuring that seniority of Asian participants is matched by the European counterparts.

Cluster 2: Increasing outcomes of sectoral efforts

Recommendation 5: Regional integration

Objectives for the support of regional integration – in economic and non-economic areas – should be based on realistic assessments of the partners’ needs, interests and capacities. Regional approaches should not be followed as a matter of course where bilateral strategies offer the potential for success.

The EU’s approach to SAARC is in need of a comprehensive and critical reflection. There are four options that could be followed, as alternatives or in parallel.

First, if EU co-operation with SAARC as an organisation is the preferred option, support will have to focus on thematic areas that are not seen as sensitive or highly political by the SAARC member states, and consequently are of interest to the entire group. Consideration should also be given to putting the EU Delegation in Kathmandu in charge of managing the co-operation, given that the SAARC Secretariat is also located in Kathmandu.

Second, an alternative regional-level approach could involve other regional organisations in South Asia – for example, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) – being the EU’s main partner, instead of SAARC.

Third, following on from findings of the 2010 Mid-Term Review (MTR), EU-SAARC co-operation could be re-designed as a network of bilateral interventions – that is, similar projects in support of national capacities and commitments in the process of regional integration in all or selected member states.

Fourth, the current approach of subsuming co-operation with SAARC under the pillar of “support to regional integration” could be abandoned altogether to allow for more flexibility in

selecting the most suitable areas of co-operation.

Selecting and pursuing the most promising and feasible option first require a detailed EU-commissioned assessment of the relative potential of the alternative SAARC-strategies. It then requires a working group, comprising EU and SAARC representatives, to discuss and agree on the future co-operation agenda.

Recommendation 6: Environment, energy and climate change

Restructure the SWITCH-Asia programme by refocusing its various components and by concentrating on fewer sectors to generate more synergy and impact.

There is a need for more integration of the three main components – the grant projects, the Policy Support programmes, and the Networking Facility.

With regard to grant projects, they should concentrate on one or only a few national or regional priority sectors and/or specific SCP themes. Moreover, it is recommended that grant projects conduct a baseline study at the start, and develop and run a monitoring system that measures not only outputs, but also results.

The regional Policy Support Component (PSC) should establish links with grant projects, and in general with the private sector. In addition, it is recommended that the national PSC programmes are redesigned to avoid dispersion of activities and to generate more impact. In this context, one option is that the PSC should focus on furthering sustainable consumption, rather than sustainable production. This is because the PSC is in a much better position than grant projects to ensure political support and to mobilise the high levels of government funding required to roll out sustainable consumption strategies and awareness campaigns.

Recommendation 7: Higher education

Keep gateways to European HE systems open for Asian higher education institutions (HEIs) and explore ways of improving the impacts on teaching and research in Asian HEIs and of providing HE for disadvantaged groups in Asia.

In future, EU interventions could explore three distinct avenues of translating the unused potential of the regional-level HE interventions into real impacts on teaching and research quality and capacity.

First, regional support should find ways to leverage the potential of teaching capacity and research networks of EM graduates.

Second, EU efforts could extend the reach of existing gateways to European HE and generate new gateways by exploring remote and online forms of teaching and research collaboration.

Third, extending HE to members of disadvantaged groups would require additional measures aimed at raising individual capabilities to meet the minimum standards for HE participation in general and EM participation in particular.

A possible option here might comprise the provision of foundation courses to raise individual academic capabilities. The EU could consider addressing equity issues separately from providing access to (academically excellent) European HEIs. EUDs are best placed to develop foundation courses or tailored offerings for disadvantaged groups.

***Recommendation 8: Aid to uprooted people
Raise issues of population uprooting and migration to the regional level, where solutions need to be devised.***

The EU, in its regional political dialogue, should attempt to raise the profile of uprooting. This will be especially challenging because ASEAN and SAARC countries are involved. At the same time (and related to Recommendation 5), the EU should build on its experience in dealing with labour migration and immigration issues to raise the profile of this problem area at the regional level. In many cases, technical assistance on international good practice will need to be provided. This is an area in which the European “brand” and the long and diverse experience among the Member States, both as importers and exporters of labour, can be brought to bear. The EU can certainly raise the profile of regional labour migration to a higher level in its bilateral political dialogue in many countries. This should be co-ordinated wherever possible with relevant International Labour Organisation (ILO) offices.

Recommendation 9: Regional health

Improve co-ordination between regional health support, bilateral health systems strengthening, and the new Global Health budget line.

As highlighted by the new emphasis on “global public good” in the Global Health budget line, cross-border aspects of health and the need to address free-riding and other market failures have moved to the centre of the EU’s development co-operation agenda in health. While

bilateral programmes continue to strengthen health systems across the board – from interventions to improve access for the poor to health care finance reform – country-level strengthening is increasingly seen as a necessary step not only to reduce poverty within borders, but also to address global health security. Due to Asia’s key role in the dynamics of global infectious diseases, this presents opportunities for the regional-level co-operation programme. These should be understood to include not only the dramatic emergence of novel viruses, but also the creeping problems of drug resistance.

Both ASEAN and SAARC require further strengthening to address these issues. Furthermore, better co-ordination is needed between regional initiatives to support networking, national programmes of health systems strengthening, and sector reform. In particular, the new Global Health thematic budget line, Epidemiology, needs to be strengthened. This task can be co-ordinated with support in the field of higher education and research, where national and international training programmes can be financed and national research laboratories – the first line of defence against emergent diseases - can be financed. Links between the countries of Southeast Asia, South Asia and China need to be addressed in the context of an Asia-wide approach to infectious disease surveillance and control. A first step towards this could be the convening of an EU-sponsored pan-Asian conference to bring together human and animal health experts from Southeast Asia, China and South Asia.

1 Introduction: Objectives, scope and coverage of the evaluation

This Final Report presents the outcome of the “Evaluation of the European Union’s regional co-operation with Asia – Regional Level Evaluation”. The evaluation was commissioned by the DG DEVCO Evaluation Unit¹ and was implemented between January 2013 and November 2013.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) point out the main objectives of this evaluation:

- To provide the relevant external co-operation services of the EU and the wider public with an overall independent assessment of the EU’s past and current co-operation relations with Asia.
- To identify key lessons and recommendations in order to improve current and future EU strategies, programmes and actions.

In terms of temporal scope, the evaluation addresses the EU’s regional co-operation with Asia during the period 2007-2012. The evaluation team emphasises that it is fully aware that the complete co-operation framework should be taken into consideration, encompassing the agreements and other official commitments between the EU and Asia. The ToR also indicate that changes in the EU institutional set-up, with the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS), should be taken into account. It is apparent that this reorganisation will have affected the way in which aid is planned and delivered.

Based on the ToR, the following points have been assessed:

- The relevance and coherence of the EU’s co-operation strategies (all instruments included) for the period 2007-2012;
- The consistency between programming and implementation for the same period;
- The implementation of the EU’s co-operation, focusing on impact, sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency for the period under analysis – and on intended effects for the next programming cycle, 2014-2020.
- The value-added of the EU’s interventions (at both strategic and implementation levels).

The 3Cs (co-ordination, complementarity and coherence): co-ordination and complementarity of the EU’s interventions with other donors’ interventions (focusing on EU Member States); and coherence between the EU’s interventions in the field of development co-operation and other EU policies that are likely to affect the region.

This report represents the main volume of the final evaluation report, and consists of the following elements:

1. Section 1 – Introduction: gives an overall introduction to this report.
2. Section 2 - Key methodological elements: details the methodological approach, the tools and the sources of information used during the evaluation.
3. Section 3 – Context: provides information on the context of the regional-level EU support to Asia.
4. Section 4 - Answers to the Evaluation Questions (EQs): for each of the eight EQs, the detailed answer is provided, as well as a summary box.
5. Section 5 - Conclusions, clustered in groups.
6. Section 6 – Recommendations, clustered in groups and prioritised.

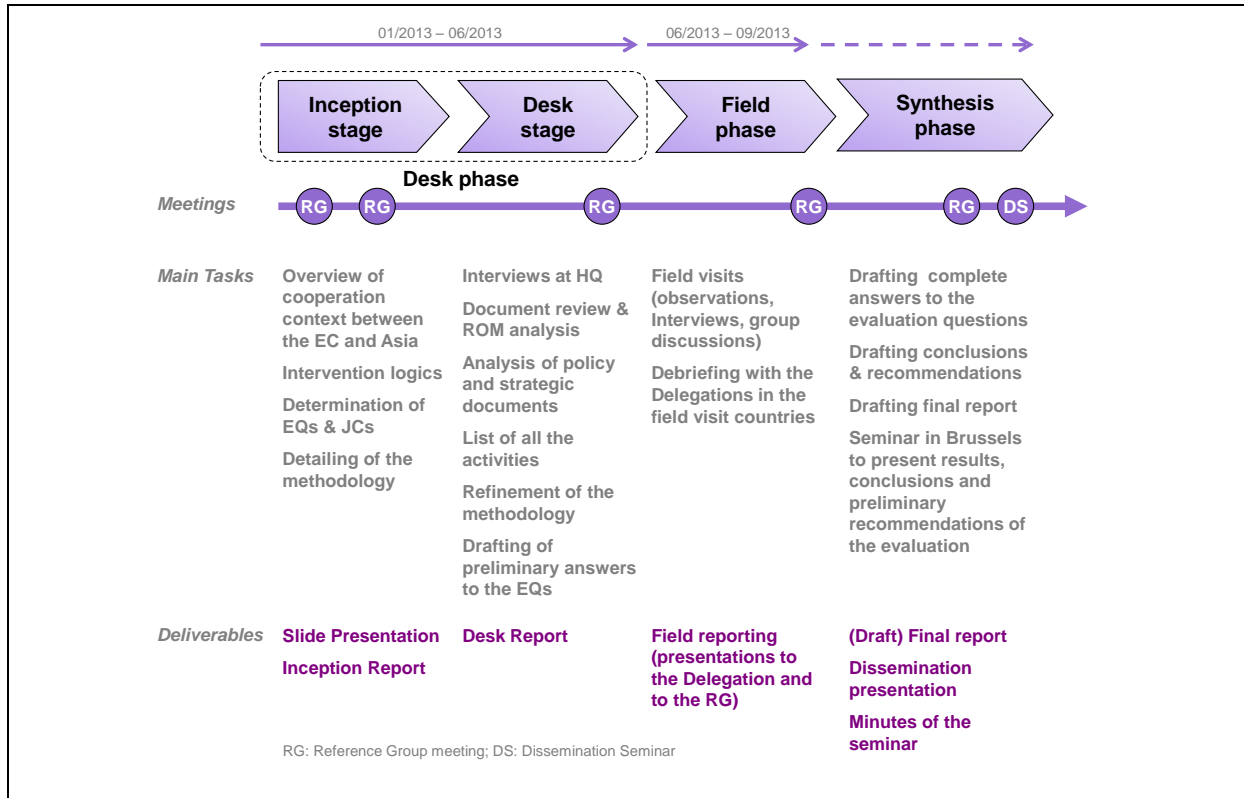
¹The Former Joint Evaluation Unit common to Directorate Generals of External Relations (RELEX), of Development (DEV) and the EuropeAid Co-operation Office.

2 Overall methodological approach

The methodology applied for this evaluation is based on the **methodological guidelines** developed by the DG DEVCO Evaluation Unit.

The evaluation was conducted in four main phases, as summarised in the figure below. It was managed and supervised by the DEVCO Evaluation Unit. Evaluation progress was closely followed by a Reference Group (RG), chaired by the Evaluation Unit and consisting of members of various EU institutions. The figure also lists the main tasks in each phase, RG meetings held, and the deliverables for each phase. In line with the ToR, each phase was started after formal approval, by the Evaluation Unit, of the deliverables of the previous phase.

Figure 1 Key steps of the evaluation process



The evaluation process adopted a systematic approach that used a variety of building blocks to gradually construct an answer to the EQs and to formulate conclusions and recommendations. The various phases and subsequent “stages” coincided with the various methodological steps undertaken within the framework of the evaluation:

- First, it was essential to form a clear understanding and overview of the objective of the evaluation, by producing an inventory and intervention logic of regional-level EU support to Asia falling within the scope of the evaluation (for more details on the inventory, see Annex 4). Once this was available, the team built the methodological framework for the entire exercise during the **inception stage**.
- On the basis of the established methodological framework, data collection could take place in two steps:
 - From the desk, during the **desk study**;
 - Through country visits in the **field phase**.
- The **synthesis phase** was then devoted to constructing answers to the EQs, and to formulating conclusions and recommendations on the basis of the data collected throughout the process.
- A final step is a dissemination seminar.

The evaluation used a **mixed-methods approach** to data and information collection. Sources of information were documentary, verbal and direct observation. **Data collection methods** were chosen

according to sources and used to gather sufficient and appropriate evidence – that is, findings of fact, to allow for analysis and evaluation, lessons learned and conclusions, as well as meaningful contextual knowledge to support useful recommendations to the EU. Data collection methods consisted of document review, semi-structured interviews, and direct observation.

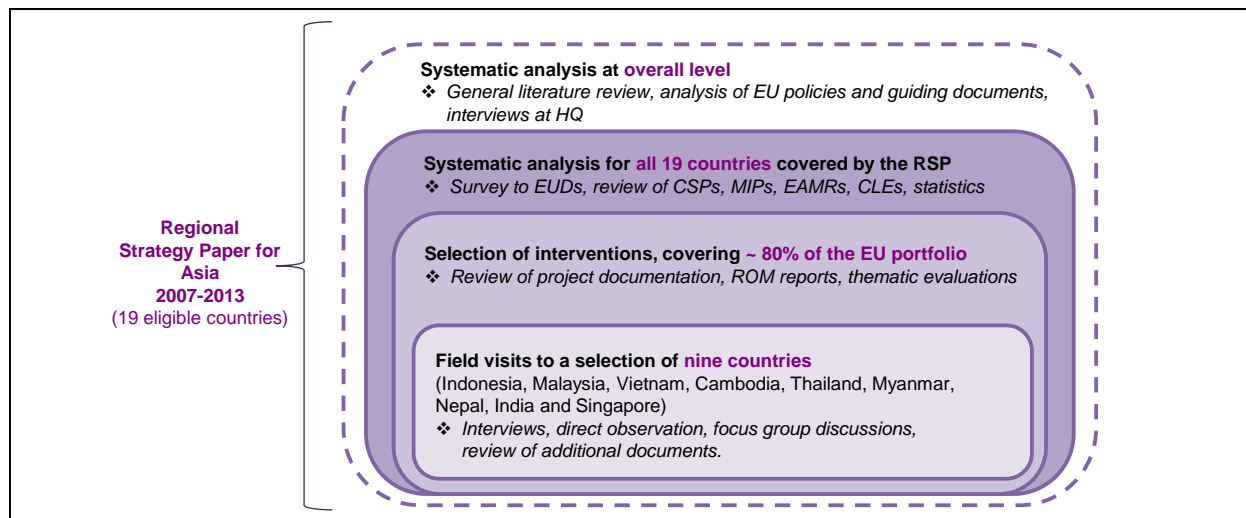
Construct validity² was checked through in-team expert review, external expert review, and the reference group. Internal validity was checked through logic modelling, explanation building, and pattern matching³. External validity⁴ was checked through replication logic. Reliability of information was checked through triangulation.

Each **evaluation question** was ‘unpacked’ consistent with the methodological guidelines of the DEVCO Evaluation Unit, to allow for the gathering of information that can be reliably, validly and meaningfully analysed, compared and assessed.

2.1 Data collection and analyses

Numerous documents (such as EU policies and guiding documents, ROM reports, reviews, evaluations, and project documentation) were consulted, and nearly 300 interviews were conducted. The figure below illustrates the coverage of funding and application of main tools during the evaluation process.

Figure 2 Coverage and application of main tools during the evaluation process



The main activities carried out during the desk phase are outlined in the list below:

- **Desk activities** (such as general literature review, analysis of EU policies and guiding documents, interviews at HQ of DG DEVCO) that were carried out at the **overall level** (covering the whole regional-level EU support to Asia).
- **Systematic analyses** of information for **all 19 countries** covered by this evaluation. These systematic analyses were mainly related to:
 - A web-survey sent to EUDs⁵.
 - A systematic analysis of the CSPs and MIPs.
 - A systematic review of reports – such as External Assistance Management Report (EAMR) – related to the EU co-operation strategy.
 - A systematic review of Country Level Evaluations (where available).

² Construct validity refers to the degree to which inferences can legitimately be made from the findings in the case studies to the theoretical constructs on which those results and analyses were based.

³ Internal Validity is the approximate truth about inferences with regard to cause-effect or causal relationships.

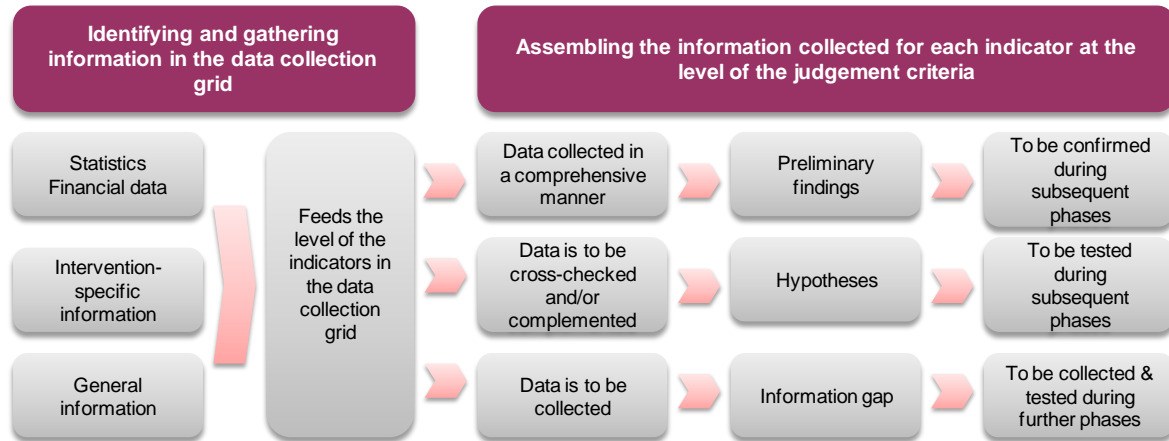
⁴ Like construct validity, external validity is related to generalising. But, whereas external validity involves generalising from the case study context to other interventions or context, construct validity involves generalising from the interventions to the overall concept or logic behind these interventions.

⁵ The web-survey sent to EUDs was carried out for 15 Delegations, as some Delegations cover more than one country (e.g. EUD to Sri Lanka and the Maldives).

- o Statistics on the national context (by the World Bank Group, or by other international institutions).
- Systematic analyses for a selection of interventions
 - o Project documentation (e.g. project evaluations, mid-term reviews).
 - o Results-oriented monitoring (ROM) reports.
 - o Analysis of thematic evaluations.
- **Field visits** to a selection of nine countries.

During the whole evaluation, the evaluation team followed a structured data collection process, as outlined in the figure below.

Figure 3 Data collection process in this evaluation



2.2 Sample of countries and interventions

In the desk phase, interventions⁶ were selected for systematic analyses on the basis of the following general relevance criteria:

1. **Geographical coverage:** the sample is illustrative for general tendencies in the Asian region and covers examples from all three sub-regions (South Asia, Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia).
2. **Volume of funding:** in most cases, only the largest interventions have been selected under each thematic area.
3. **Timeframe:** the sample is representative of the entire period evaluated and covers already completed interventions, as well as ongoing and recently-started programmes and projects.
4. **Availability of information:** applying this criterion ensured that enough information (e.g. monitoring reports, evaluations, final reports) was available to carry out the analyses.

In addition to these general selection criteria, specific criteria were applied to the respective thematic sectors (e.g. for environment) to take into account differences in the approach and nature of interventions in these fields.

⁶ A complete list of interventions funded by the RSP can be found in Volume 2b.

Table 1 Selection of decisions and interventions during the desk phase

Sector	Coverage during desk study	EU portfolio ⁷ and % covered
Regional Integration	The desk study looked across most decisions to gain a holistic view of the EU's support – because none of the three supported organisations and dialogue mechanisms (ASEAN, SAARC and ASEM) is representative of the EU's support to regional integration in Asia in general.	EUR 64 m (93%)
Animal and Human Health	Main funding in this sector was provided in support of "Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and Emerging Diseases Preparedness and Control in Asia", which has been implemented mainly in Southeast Asia, and interventions to combat Highly Pathogenic and Emerging Diseases (HPEDs). The desk phase looked at the largest individual interventions in at least three countries and at the regional level. A big decision that came into effect in 2012 was considered, to the extent that documentation already available allows for an assessment of the implementation process.	EUR 43 m (98 %)
Environment	For SWITCH-Asia, the desk phase was based on a selection of the funded grant projects of SWITCH-Asia – in particular, 28 grant projects that were subject to the ROM exercise, the National Policy Support Programmes and the Regional Programme, and the Network Facility. SWITCH-Asia is implemented in 16 Asian countries. For FLEGT, the focus was on countries that received most support from the facility. For the Asian Investment Facility (AIF), the analysis focused on the current portfolio and planning (funded interventions are now due to be started).	EUR 90 m (61 %)
Higher Education	The desk phase focused on a sample of the largest interventions in South Asia, Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia.	EUR 76 m (74 %)
Aid to uprooted people	The programme has been bilaterally implemented in Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, Afghanistan and Nepal, the Philippines, as well as in Bangladesh. The desk phase focused on the largest bilateral programmes in this sector: Afghanistan, Burma, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Moreover, AUP programmes for Indonesia and the Philippines were included in the Desk Phase review.	EUR 169 m (90 %)

The same criteria for selection of cases were applied during the field study analysis. Moreover, these criteria were complemented by the following considerations:

- The field studies help to complement the information gaps identified in the desk phase.
- The field studies are diverse enough to validate the hypotheses that emerged from the desk phase.
- The field studies will help in highlighting potentially interesting lessons learned.

The table below presents the final selection of field study countries agreed upon with the RG, each benefiting from focused research of between two-five days on specific issues.

Table 2 Field study countries

Southeast Asia	South Asia
Indonesia	Nepal
Malaysia	India
Vietnam	
Cambodia	
Thailand	
Myanmar	
Singapore	

⁷ Committed amounts.

During the field mission, the evaluation team implemented several clusters, which concerned the following topics:

- Cluster 1: Regional integration (in economic and non-economic fields) and policy dialogue.
- Cluster 2: Environment, energy and climate change.
- Cluster 3: Higher education.
- Cluster 4: Aid to uprooted people.

These clusters were aligned according to the sectors⁸ and the EQs, and covered a selection of interventions to analyse. Each member of the evaluation team also collected information on the regional strategy and regional added value (i.e. EQ7 and EQ8).

For each cluster, at least three short and focused in-country missions were made. As presented in the table below, some countries were covered by several clusters due to their importance, based on the selection criteria described above.

2.3 Challenges and limitations

During the desk and field phases, the evaluation faced a number of challenges:

- Information available on EU databases and from other DGs was not always easily retrievable. This made the inventory exercises and other analyses relatively time-consuming. Furthermore, the level of availability of documents on relevant interventions in individual countries varied considerably. For some countries and interventions, CRIS information was sketchy, while others were well documented.
- Limited information was available on interventions that had only recently started (i.e. in 2012). Evidence was thin in these cases. While additional evidence was gathered during the field phase, the overall picture did not change substantially.
- The EUD Survey provided useful insights into many aspects of the EU-Asia strategy, but the response rate to individual questions varied markedly. This limited the use of the survey results.
- While careful consideration was given to the selection of the countries visited during the field phase, compromises were unavoidable. Therefore, the field phase could not cover all thematic areas of EU-Asia co-operation to the same breadth and depth.

⁸ It is noteworthy that, due to the overlaps between regional integration and policy dialogue, the interventions to analyse in cluster 1 are presented together.

3 Background and context of regional-level EU support to Asia

3.1 The Asia context

Asia is diverse in population, languages, ethnic groups, religions, traditions and cultures. The region accounts for more than half of the world's population, a quarter of the economic wealth created every year, and is home to the second and third largest economies in the world (China and Japan), with another economy (India) in the top ten. While Japan and Singapore are among the 20 richest economies in the world in terms of nominal per capita income, countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Cambodia and North Korea remain among the poorest, with a GDP per capita of less than USD 1,000 in 2011.

The RSP 2007-2013 applies the common political definition of Asia, which comprises the three sub-regions – South Asia, Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia (often also referred to as East Asia) – but excludes the Middle East and Central Asia. However, the coverage of the RSP is ambivalently defined. On the one hand, 19 countries are identified as “eligible countries in Asia” under the Strategy (p. 1): **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar/Burma, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam.** There was no official development co-operation with the DPRK during the duration of the RSP. On the other hand, one of the RSP's priority areas, “Support to Regional Integration”, focuses on the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Association of South-East Asia Nations (ASEAN), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) as “*key dialogue partners*” for the EU (p. 3). However, these organisations and forums also comprise members that are not among the 19 “eligible countries”, such as Brunei, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and several others. In fact, the Singapore-based Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF), the non-governmental arm of ASEM, has been one of the largest beneficiaries of EU-funding under the RSP. Furthermore, several activities and projects were funded in countries other than the 19 selected.

This practice is in line with the provisions of DCI. Among the partners included for development assistance under Article 1 of the Regulation are all Asian countries and territories, with the exception of Brunei, Chinese Taipei (Taiwan), Hong Kong, Japan, Macao, South Korea, and Singapore. However, according to Article 19, Paragraph 7, in order to foster regional co-operation, the EU may decide, when adopting certain annual action programmes, multiannual indicative programmes and strategy papers or special measures for co-operation, that projects or programmes of a regional or cross-border nature carried out with non-developing countries are eligible. Annex V of the Regulation includes these non-developing countries and territories as identified above. Hence, although the DCI clearly delineates the geographic scope of development co-operation, it does make exceptions. In this case, the exception allows the inclusion of all the countries of Asia as potential beneficiaries of development assistance, in the context of regional co-operation activities.⁹

In various sections, the RSP elaborates on relations between the EU and Asia in general, and outlines the context for the entire Asian continent, rather than just the 19 “eligible countries”. Consequently, the following context analysis adopts the same approach, but gives special emphasis to the 19 countries that form the core of the RSP.

⁹REGULATION (EC) No 1905/2006 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 18 December 2006, establishing a financing instrument for development co-operation, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/lex/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:378:0041:0071:EN:PDF>

Table 3 Asia-19, key economic and development data¹⁰

Country	Population (thousands)* 2011	GDP per capita in US\$* 2011	Human Development Index (HDI value)** 2013	HDI Rank** (2013)	% of Population living below \$1.25 PPP per day ** (c) 2013	Mean years of schooling (of adults; years)** 2013	Life expectancy at birth (years; F/M)* 2010-2015	Education Index* (a)	Health Index* (a)	Gender Inequality Index (GII), ranking** 2013
Afghanistan	32,358	586	0.374	175	n/a	3.1	49.5/49.2	0.367	0.452	147
Bangladesh	150,494	706	0.515	146	43.3	4.8	70.2/68.5	0.415	0.772	111
Bhutan	738	2,336	0.538	140	10.2	2.3	69.8/65.9	0.336	0.744	92
Cambodia	14,305	897	0.543	138	22.8	5.8	65.1/62.2	0.502	0.68	96
China	1,347,565	5,439	0.699	101	13.1	7.5	75.6/72.1	0.623	0.843	35
India	1,241,492	1,528	0.554	136	32.7	4.4	67.6/64.4	0.45	0.717	132
Indonesia	242,326	3,495	0.629	121	18.1	5.8	71.8/68.3	0.584	0.779	106
Korea DPR	24,451	506	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	68.8	n/a	0.77	n/a
Lao PDR	6,288	1,303	0.543	138	33.9	4.6	69.4/66.4	0.432	0.749	100
Malaysia	28,859	9,977	0.769	64	n/a	9.5	76.9/72.5	0.73	0.855	42
Maldives	320	6,405	0.688	104	n/a	5.8	78.7/76.0	0.568	0.897	64
Mongolia	2,800	3,060	0.675	108	n/a	8.3	72.8/65.0	0.722	0.765	56
Myanmar	48,337	1,144	0.498	149	n/a	3.9	67.9/64.1	0.404	0.713	80
Nepal	30,486	607	0.463	157	24.8	3.2	70.1/68.1	0.356	0.77	102
Pakistan	176,745	1,182	0.515	146	21	4.9	66.9/64.9	0.386	0.717	123
Philippines	94,852	2,370	0.654	114	18.4	8.9	72.6/66.0	0.684	0.769	77
Sri Lanka	21,045	2,812	0.715	92	7	9.3	78.4/72.1	0.68	0.867	75
Thailand	69,519	5,318	0.690	103	0.4	6.6	77.8/71.1	0.597	0.854	66
Vietnam	88,792	1,392	0.617	127	40.1	5.5	77.4/73.4	0.503	0.87	48

Source: * UN Data, <http://data.un.org>; ** UNDP, Human Development Report 2013

¹⁰ (a) One of the three indices on which the Human Development Index is built. It is based on mean years of schooling (of adults) and expected years of schooling (of children). The highest possible theoretical score is 1, indicating perfect educational attainment.

(b) Life expectancy at birth expressed as an index using a minimum value of 20 years and observed maximum value over the period 1980-2010.

(c) Most recent data.

3.1.1 The socio-economic context

Although Asia as a whole has made some significant progress towards meeting the MDGs – with six of its countries among the 20 top performers worldwide up to 2011¹¹ – poverty is still a major problem, as the region is home to two-thirds of the world’s poor. Some sub-regions have seen greater progress than others. In India, poverty rates fell from 51% to 37% between 1990 and 2008 (latest available data), and in the South Asia region excluding India the rates fell from 52% to 26% in the same period. However, they remain high compared to other parts of the continent. Extreme poverty has most dramatically fallen in East Asia, particularly as the result of economic growth and poverty reduction in China, where the number of workers living below the USD 1.25 a day poverty line decreased by 158 million between 2000 and 2011, and by 24 million between 2007 and 2011.¹²

On the Human Development Index 2013, Asian countries were ranked between 10th position (Japan) and 175th (Afghanistan), underlining the significant development gaps among the continent’s nations. The political diversity is equally striking, spanning the entire range of political systems and forms of governments, from stable or consolidating democracies to military-authoritarian regimes and communist systems.

Major threats and challenges – including, but not limited to, intra-state and cross-border violence, human trafficking, illegal trade in drugs and weapons, the risk of nuclear proliferation, the potential spread of highly infectious diseases, and environmental degradation – are also prevalent in Asia. Many parts of the region are prone to natural disasters.

Asia has experienced the largest share of global disaster occurrences over the last decade, with seven out of the 10 deadliest disasters worldwide of the last decade occurring in South, Southeast and Northeast Asia. In 2012, natural disasters in Asia claimed more lives than anywhere else in the world. Countries in the region reported 83 disasters – mostly floods – in 2012. The disasters killed some 3,100 people, affected 64.5 million, and caused USD 15 billion in damage. Between 2002 and 2011, eight of the most devastating natural disasters occurred in Asia; five of these were in countries included in the list of 19 countries of the RSE. The situation is even more dramatic when looked at it from a long-term perspective: from 1950 to 2011, nine out of 10 people affected by disasters worldwide were in Asia.¹³

Table 4 Top 10 worldwide deadliest disasters: 2002-2011

Disaster	Date	Country	Number of deaths
Earthquake	Jan 2010	Haiti	222,570
Earthquake/ Tsunami	Dec 2004	Indonesia	165,708
Tropical cyclone “Nargis”	May 2008	Myanmar	138,366
Earthquake	May 2008	China	87,479
Earthquake	Oct 2005	Pakistan	73,3338
Heat wave	Summer 2010	Russia	55,736
Earthquake/Tsunami	Dec 2004	Sri Lanka	35,399
Earthquake	Dec 2003	Iran	26,796
Heat wave	Summer 2003	Italy	20,089
Earthquake/Tsunami	March 2011	Japan	19,846

Source: USAID, CRED Crunch, Issue No. 30, “Disaster Data: A Balanced Perspective”, January 2013, p. 2.

Ongoing conflicts or tensions in several countries, coupled with generally weak civil societies, add to vulnerability and contribute to human rights abuses, including discrimination against minorities. According to the Conflict Barometer 2012¹⁴, with a total of 124 active domestic, bilateral and multilateral conflicts in 2012, Asia accounted for nearly a third of the world’s conflicts. Most conflicts concerned intra-state disputes over political systems or ideology and subnational predominance, followed by resource conflict, and conflicts concerning national power, autonomy, and secession.

¹¹ China, Vietnam, The Philippines, Malaysia, Mongolia and Nepal (in that order), according to the Center for Global Development MDG Progress Index, which measures progress towards all MDGs on an annual basis, based on a scores system, available at http://www.cgdev.org/section/topics/poverty/mdg_scorecards.

¹² United Nations: The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012, New York 2012, p. 7-8.

¹³ Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIC) (2012): Conflict Barometer 2012.

¹⁴ Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIC) (2012): Conflict Barometer 2012.

On the other hand, Asia's economic development has been impressive. Since the 1980s (with a short interruption in the second half of the 1990s), the continent has outperformed most other regions in terms of economic growth. In 2011, GDP per capita at constant US prices in Asia increased by 6.6%, compared with 4.1% global growth.

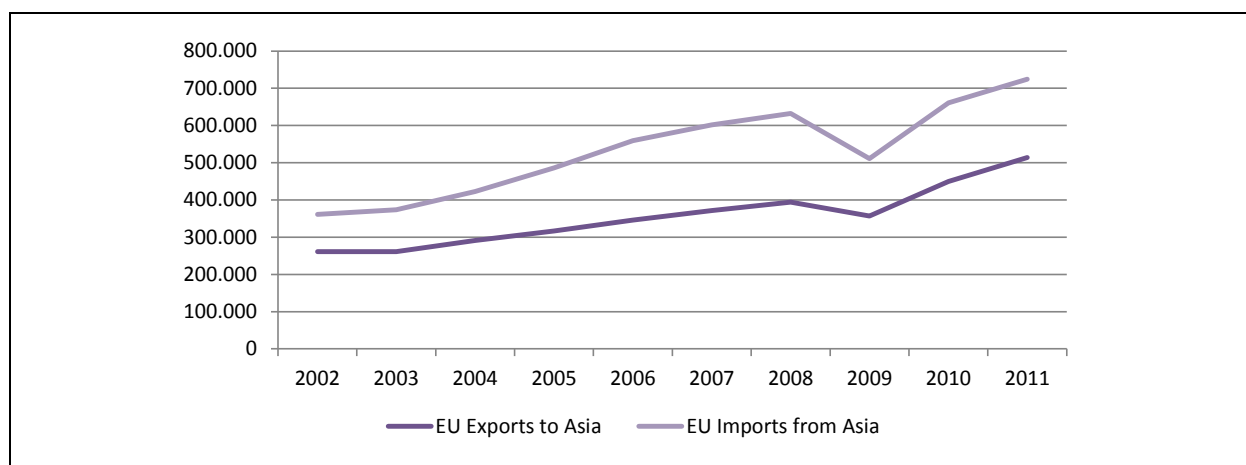
Table 5 Gross domestic product in constant USD prices, changes in per cent 1990-2010

	1990-2000	2000-2005	2008	2009	2010	2011
Asia and the Pacific	1.3	4.3	3.2	0.8	6.6	4.3
LLDC	-2.7	9.0	6.8	3.6	6.7	7.1
LDC	4.3	6.9	6.5	5.5	6.8	6.3
ASEAN	5.0	5.0	4.0	1.4	8.1	4.5
SAARC	5.2	6.6	4.7	8.2	8.2	6.5
Central Asia	-3.8	9.1	6.8	3.3	6.8	7.2
Low income economies	2.2	6.4	6.3	4.9	6.1	5.7
Lower middle income econ.	7.3	8.1	7.7	8.0	9.4	6.3
Upper middle income econ.	-0.5	5.7	3.5	-4.8	5.5	7.6
High income economies	2.1	2.1	-0.2	-3.9	4.5	0.8
Africa	2.3	5.2	4.9	1.1	4.0	-2.5
Europe	1.8	1.9	0.4	-4.2	2.0	1.6
Latin America and Caribbean	3.2	2.6	3.8	-2.1	5.9	4.1
North America	3.4	2.4	-0.3	-3.5	3.0	1.9
Other countries/areas	4.1	4.4	5.7	1.3	5.1	n/a
World	2.3	2.9	1.5	-2.1	4.1	2.6

Source: ESCAP, Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2012 and 2013.

Asia's above-average economic performance has established the continent as Europe's main trading region. In 2011, EU-27 trade with Asia amounted to EUR 1,237,693 million, representing 38% of the EU total external trade in goods, EUR 3,267,467 million. The EU-Asia trade volume steadily increased between 2002 and 2011, with 2009 being the only year of a decline in exports and imports, due to the global economic crisis. Total trade almost doubled during this period, while the EU's trade deficit also increased sharply.

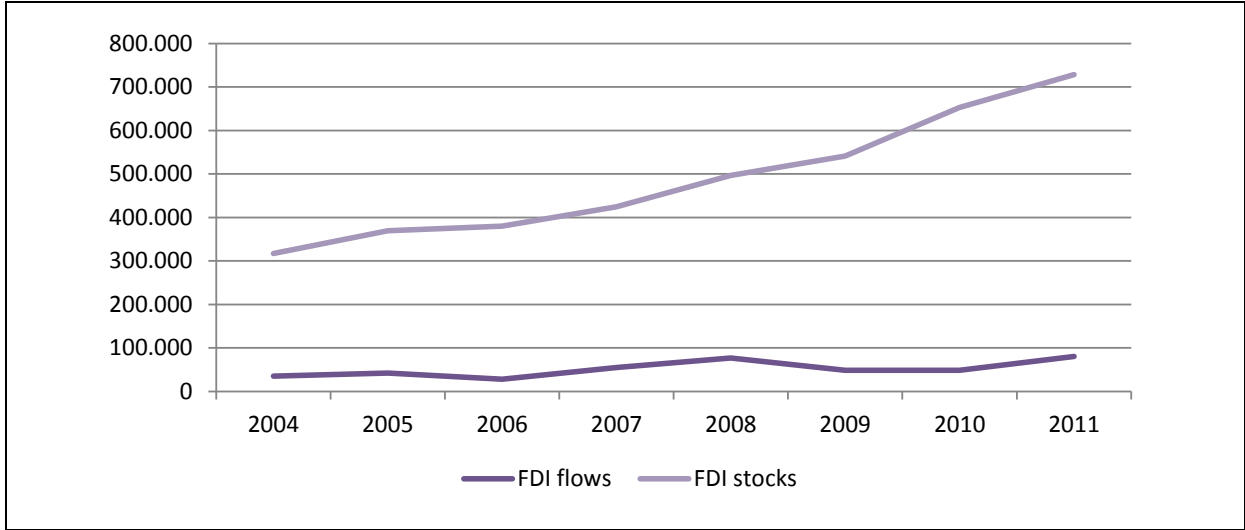
Figure 4 EU Trade with Asia, 2002-2011 in million Euro



Source: Eurostats data

The economic significance of Asia for the EU is also reflected by fast-growing EU direct investment flows. European direct investment in Asia amounts to roughly a third of EU-27 Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in non-EU countries. Both FDI stocks and FDI inflows from EU sources in Asia more than doubled between 2004 and 2011.

Figure 5 EU-27 Direct Investment (FDI) in Asia, 2004-2011, in million Euro

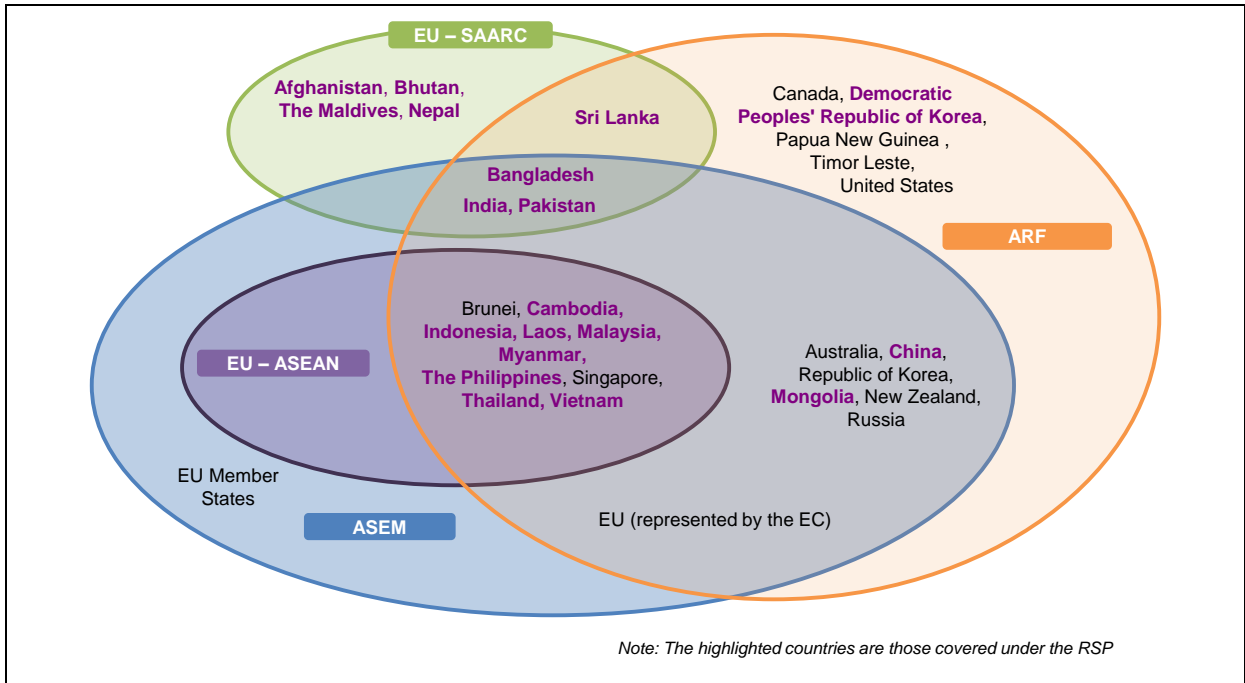


Source: Eurostats data

3.1.2 Institutional context

All of the 19 countries are also members of one or more regional or inter-regional organisations, which are supported within the framework of the RSP – namely, ASEAN and the related ARF, the SAARC, and the dialogue mechanism ASEM. The following figure depicts membership and overlaps of regional and inter-regional organisations in Asia, while the subsequent boxes provide additional information – for example, on the organisational structure and achieved milestones of ASEAN, SAARC and ASEM.

Figure 6 EU-supported regional and inter-regional organisations and dialogue mechanisms in Asia



Source: Particip analysis

3.2 European development co-operation rationale with Asia

3.2.1 Global EU development policy strategic objectives and priorities

Article 177 of the Amsterdam Treaty (entry into force on 1st of May 1999) defines the EU development policy priorities as follows:

- Sustainable economic and social development in favour of developing countries;
- With a particular emphasis on the most disadvantaged countries. Progressive and harmonious integration of developing countries in the world economy;
- Fighting poverty in developing countries.

The European Consensus on Development, signed 20th December 2005, is intended to guide both Community and Member State development co-operation and sets out common objectives and principles for development co-operation.¹⁵

3.2.2 The Treaty of Lisbon (2009) and Agenda for Change (2011)

The Treaty of Lisbon set out for the first time a specific legal basis for humanitarian aid. This provision stresses the specificity of the policy and the application of the principles of international humanitarian law – in particular, impartiality and non-discrimination. The Treaty of Lisbon states that the reduction and eradication of poverty is the primary objective of the EU's development co-operation policy. This goal must be respected when the EU implements policies likely to affect developing countries. This implies also that development policy is a policy in its own right, and not an accessory of common foreign and security policy.

The Treaty of Lisbon classifies development co-operation and humanitarian aid as “shared parallel competences”. This means that the EU conducts an autonomous policy, which neither prevents the Member States from exercising their competences nor makes the EU's policy merely “complementary” to those of the Member States.¹⁶

The Agenda for Change, presented by the EC in October 2011, stipulates that EU development aid spending should target countries that are in the greatest need of external support and where it can really make a difference, including fragile states. Co-operation should take different forms for countries that are already experiencing sustained growth or that have sufficient resources of their own.

EU assistance should focus on two priority areas:

1. Human rights, democracy and other key elements of good governance;
2. Inclusive and sustainable growth for human development.

The EU aims to help create growth in developing countries so that they have the means to lift themselves out of poverty. Aid will therefore target particular areas:

- Social protection, health, education and jobs;
- The business environment, regional integration, and world markets;
- Sustainable agriculture and energy.

The EU should also try to further improve the effectiveness of the aid it delivers. Furthermore, the EU will explore innovative ways of financing development, such as the blending of grants and loans. It should also improve the coherence of its internal and external policies: A significant share of EU aid is delivered in the form of budget support.¹⁷

3.2.3 ALA regulations (1996-2006)

The main legal basis for co-operation with Asia between 1996 and 2006 was EU Regulation 92/432, the “Asia-Latin America” (ALA) regulation. This covered financial and technical assistance and economic co-operation. ALA included partnerships with states, regions (e.g. Asia regional programmes), decentralised authorities, regional organisations (e.g. ASEAN), public agencies, local or traditional

¹⁵ The European Consensus on Development, 20 December 2005, p. 4.

¹⁶ Treaty of Lisbon. Taking Europe into the 21st century, http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/index_en.htm.

¹⁷ European Commission (2011): Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change, COM(2011) 637 final, http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/development-policies/documents/agenda_for_change_en.pdf.

communities, private institutes and operators, including co-operatives and non-governmental organisations.

Whereas reducing poverty did not become official EU development policy until 2000, the ALA regulation highlighted that aid should primarily target the poorest sections of the population and the poorest countries in the two regions. The Regulation specified a long list of priority sectors, ranging from drugs to the environment, rural development, and democracy and human rights. The main interventions specified are economic co-operation and technical and financial assistance, which both take the form of grants. The Regulation specified that economic co-operation should be in the mutual interest of the EU and the partner country or organisation. No similar requirement was stipulated for financial and technical assistance.

The 2002 evaluation of the ALA regulation made this conclusion: *“As a strategy document, despite a high level of detail, it quickly became obsolete. Only a few years after its entry into force, more targeted regional strategy documents had already been adopted by the Commission (in 1994 for Asia and in 1995 for Latin America); these documents were updated on several occasions in following years. Furthermore, Regulation 443/92 did not provide for bringing different budget lines together in a coherent way, especially in the early years before the clarification of budgetary rules on separate legal bases for separate budget lines. Overall, the amount of financial resources devoted to both regions is perceived to be disproportionate (too small) in relation to the Commission’s ambitious stated goals. This is not to say that increases in global resources should be approved automatically without stronger allocation criteria and co-ordination of horizontal budget lines.”*¹⁸

In 2007, the Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI) replaced the wide range of geographic and thematic instruments that had been created over time. The objective was to increase the effectiveness of the EU development co-operation.

3.2.4 DCI regulations (2007-2013)

The regulation establishing the DCI was adopted on 18 December 2006. The geographic part of it replaced the ALA regulation for developing countries in Asia. The instrument is valid for the period from 2007 to 2013.

The overall goal of the instrument is the eradication of poverty in partner countries and regions, in the context of sustainable development, including pursuit of the MDGs, as well as the promotion of democracy, good governance and respect for human rights and for the rule of law.

In Asia, priorities stated by DCI are: pursuing MDGs in the field of health, including HIV/AIDS, and education; addressing governance issues to help build an active and organised civil society, and to enhance the protection of human rights, including the rights of the child. Priorities are country-specific. Funds are allocated following country strategy papers, which include multi-annual indicative programmes, specifying the priority objectives, and the indicative multi-annual financial allocations.

Furthermore, the EU prepares annual action programmes that specify the objectives pursued in the fields of intervention, the expected results, the management procedures, and the total amount of financing planned. They contain a description of the operations to be financed, an indication of the amounts allocated for each operation, and an indicative implementation timetable.

3.2.5 Regional strategic objectives and priorities with Asia

The overall strategic framework for the EU’s action in Asia is based on the Commission’s 2001 Communication *“Europe and Asia: A Strategic Framework for Enhanced Partnerships”*.¹⁹ The strategy’s core objective was *“strengthening the EU’s political and economic presence across the region, and raising this to a level commensurate with the growing global weight of an enlarged EU”*.

In particular, the strategic framework aimed to:

- Contribute to peace and security in the region and globally, through a broadening of our engagement with the region;

¹⁸ Evaluation of Regulation 443/92 (Asia, Latin America) – ref. 951614, Summary, 2002, available at http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/evaluation_reports/2002/951614_docs_en.htm

¹⁹ European Commission (2001): Europe and Asia: A Strategic Framework for Enhanced Partnerships, COM(2001) 469 final, available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52001DC0469:EN:HTML>

- Further strengthen our mutual trade and investment flows with the region;
- Promote the development of the less prosperous countries of the region, addressing the root causes of poverty;
- Contribute to the protection of human rights and to the spreading of democracy, good governance and the rule of law;
- Build global partnerships and alliances with Asian countries, in appropriate international fora, to help address both the challenges and the opportunities offered by globalisation and to strengthen joint efforts on global environmental and security issues; and
- Help strengthen the awareness of Europe in Asia (and vice versa).

These general objectives and priorities were elaborated further in a series of specific action points for the region as a whole, and for each of the four key sub-regions (South Asia, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, Australasia).

The first Regional Programming Document for Asia was prepared in 2004, covering the period 2005-2006. It included three All-Asia programmes (on trade and investment, higher education, and environment), two sub-regional programmes (SAARC and ASEAN), and a small budget for reserve.²⁰

The subsequent Regional Strategy 2007-2013 focused on three priority areas:

1. Support to Regional Integration – the key dialogue partners for the EU being ASEM, ASEAN, ARF and SAARC;
2. Policy and Know-How based Co-operation in:
 - o Environment, Energy and Climate Change, through Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP-Asia) and the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) programme;
 - o Higher Education and Support to Research Institutes;
 - o Cross-border Co-operation in Animal and Human Health;
3. Support to Uprooted People.

Further to the three priority areas, cross-cutting issues (such as the promotion of human rights and democracy, gender equality, good governance, the rights of the child, indigenous peoples' rights, environmental sustainability, and combating HIV/AIDS) are, in addition to being addressed in thematic programmes and instruments, streamlined in each component of the Regional Programme, when relevant.²¹

3.3 Inventory of regional-level EU support to Asia

In line with the ToR, the inventory of the regional-level EU support to Asia provides an overview of the interventions financed by the EU in the countries covered by the evaluation during the period 2007-2012. The analysis of the captured interventions gives a detailed overview in terms of temporal evolution, geographical breakdown, breakdown by sector and subsector, and regional versus bilateral interventions

The inventory is based on data from the EU's CRIS²² database. In order to identify interventions related to Asia, the Evaluation Team undertook a comprehensive and systematic screening of the information contained in the CRIS database. The approach and the detailed related analysis are presented in Volume 3, Annex 4.

The box below summarises definitions of key terms as used in this evaluation.

²⁰ Strategy Paper and Indicative Programme for Multi-country Programmes in Asia, 2005-2006, available at http://eeas.europa.eu/asia/rsp/05_06_en.pdf

²¹ European Commission (2007): Regional Programming for Asia. Strategy Document 2007-2013.

²² Common RELEX Information System.

Box 1

Definitions of key terms related to the overview of EU financial information

Commitment: refers to the "contracted amount" that has been agreed between the EU and a contracting party in charge of implementing the part of the intervention related to a specific contract. The information on this financial amount is found at "contract level" in CRIS, and is marked as "planned amount" in the database.

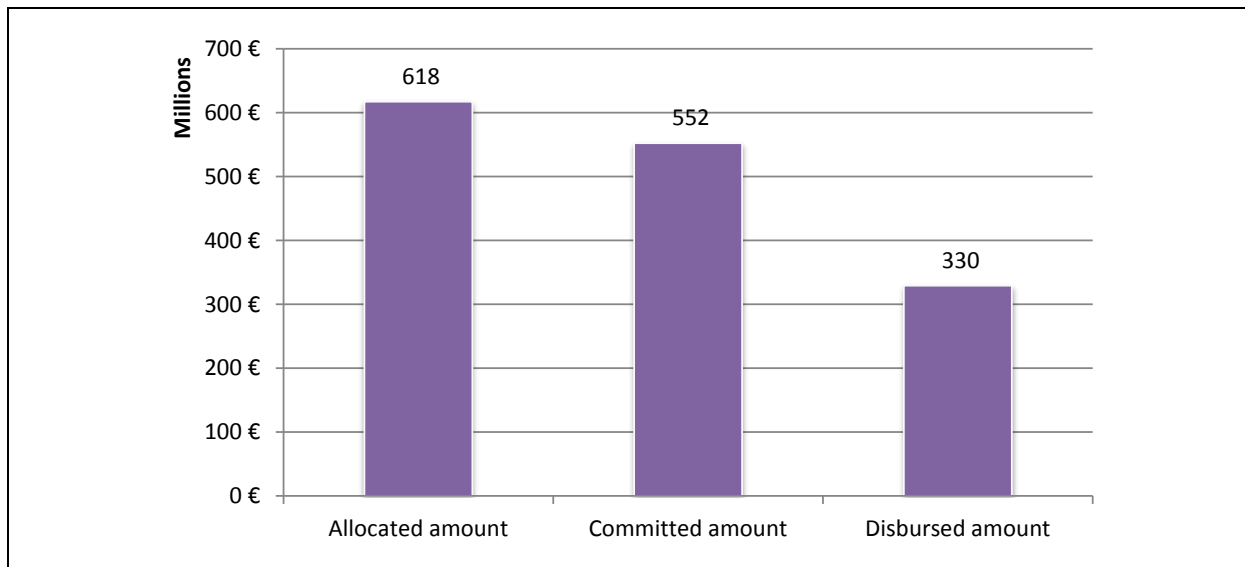
Disbursement: refers to the financial amount that has been paid by the EU in relation to a specific contract. These sums are found at "contract level" in CRIS, and are marked as "paid amount" in the database.

Allocation: refers to the "allocated amount" that has been approved in a given year by the EU on decision level.

Overall, the **EU has allocated about 618 million EUR in regional-level EU support to Asia through geographic budget lines under the Regional Strategy Paper (RSP).**

The figure illustrates the committed and disbursed amount at contract level. The overall committed amount adds up to 552 million EUR and whereas 330 million EUR have has been disbursed.

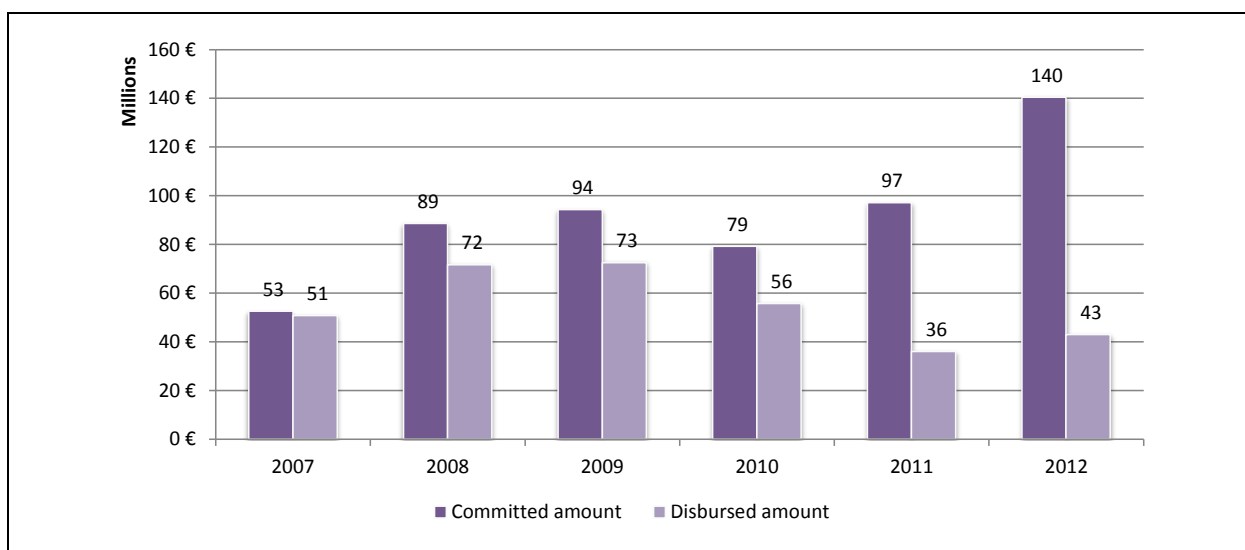
Figure 7 *Regional-level EU support to Asia: Total of allocated, committed and disbursed amounts 2007-2012 (in million EUR)*



Source: CRIS and Particip analysis (2013)

The figure below compares the totals of committed and disbursed amounts per contract year. It clearly highlights that the later the evaluation period the more significant the difference between committed and disbursed amounts becomes.

Figure 8 *Regional-level EU support to Asia: Committed and disbursed amounts per contract year 2007-2012 (in million EUR)*

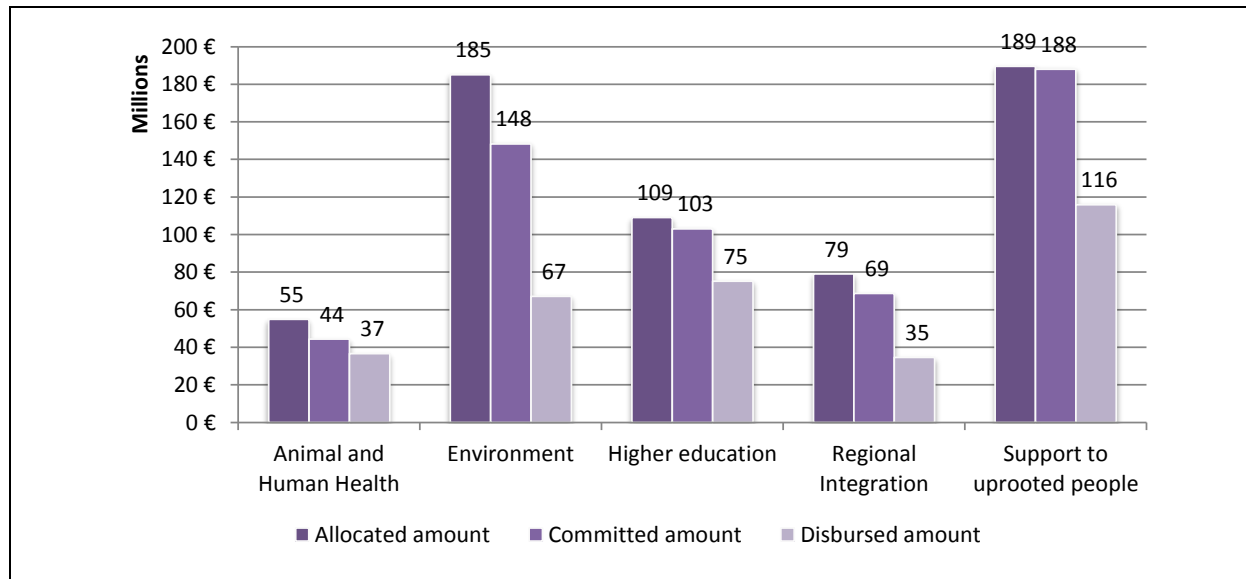


Source: CRIS and Particip analysis (2013)

The figure below depicts the allocated, committed and disbursed amounts per sector and subsector in the case of policy and knowhow-based co-operation for the geographic budget line. It illustrates:

- 9% (55 million EUR) was allocated for animal and human health.
- 30% (185 million EUR) of allocations was aimed at environment, energy and climate change.
- 17% (109 million EUR) went to higher education and support to research institutes.
- 13% (79 million EUR) was allocated to regional integration.
- 31% (189 million EUR) was aimed at supporting uprooted people.

Figure 9 Regional-level EU support to Asia: Overview of sector breakdown, allocated, committed and disbursed amount for geographic budget line (in % and in million EUR)



Source: CRIS and Particip analysis (2013)

3.4 Intervention logic of EU co-operation with Asia

3.4.1 Objectives and focal sectors

The objective of the diagram is:²³

- To provide an overview of the expected impacts of the actions supported by regional-level EU support to Asia, and the underlying logic;
- To provide an accurate overview of the main strategies, objectives and actions mentioned in the EU policy documents – in particular, the *Regional Programming for Asia 2007-2013*, *Multiannual Indicative Programming (MIP) for Asia 2007-2010*, *MIP 2011-2013*, and relevant project documentation;
- To facilitate identification of the most relevant themes and questions related to regional-level EU support to Asia.

According to the RSP, five focal sectors could be identified²⁴:

- Regional integration;
- Animal and Human Health;
- Environment, Energy and Climate Change;

²³ Evaluation methodology for EC external assistance:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/introduction/introduction_en.htm.

²⁴ In the RSP “Animal and Human Health”, “Environment, Energy and Climate Change” and “Higher Education and Support to Research Institutions” are located under the heading “Policy and Know-how based co-operation”. Together with “Regional Integration” and “Support to up-rooted people”, the RSP thus refers to three strategic areas.

- Higher Education and Support to Research Institutions;
- Support to Uprooted People.

3.4.2 The global reconstructed intervention logic²⁵

In the strand of regional integration, higher levels of regional integration and inter-regional co-operation are expected to result in explicit development gains in economic, socio-economic, political, environmental, cultural and related fields at the intermediate impact level. This, in turn, contributes directly to the advancement of MDG8, as well as sustainable economic development and improved security in the region.

For animal and human health, the specific impacts in the intervention logic lead to combatted highly and pathogenic diseases which contribute directly to improved security in Asia. Particularly stressed were interventions designed to strengthen regional and national institutions, ranging from public health agencies and research institutions to agencies responsible for animal health.

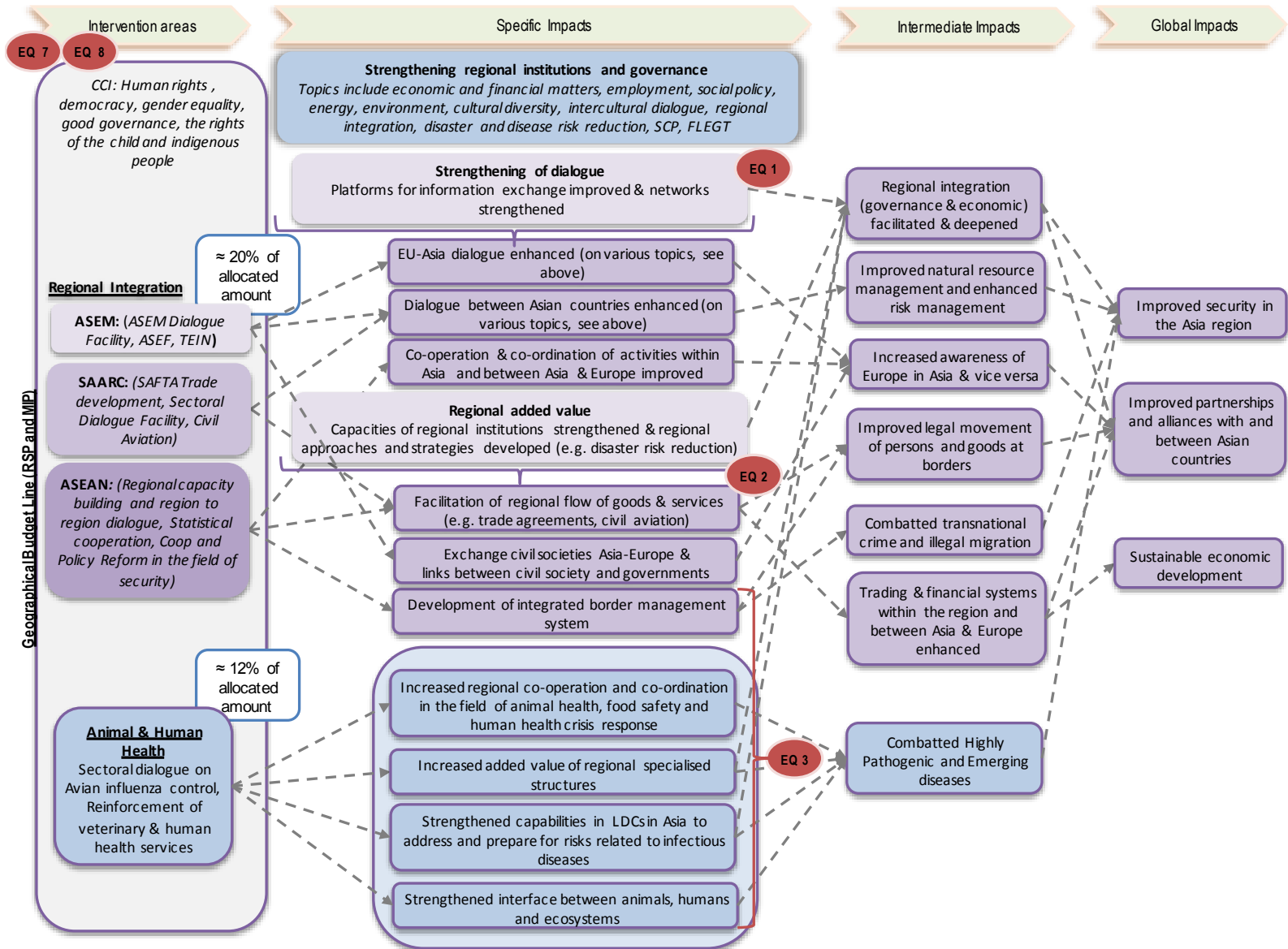
In the strand environment, energy and climate change, the results and specific impacts were expected to lead to increased sustainable consumption and production, reduced illegal logging and increased protected forest, and improved environmental co-operation between Europe and Asia and within Asia. Consequently, the overall objectives or global impacts in the IL to which the regional support contributes are threefold: improved environmental protection; sustainable or green growth; and mitigation of climate change.

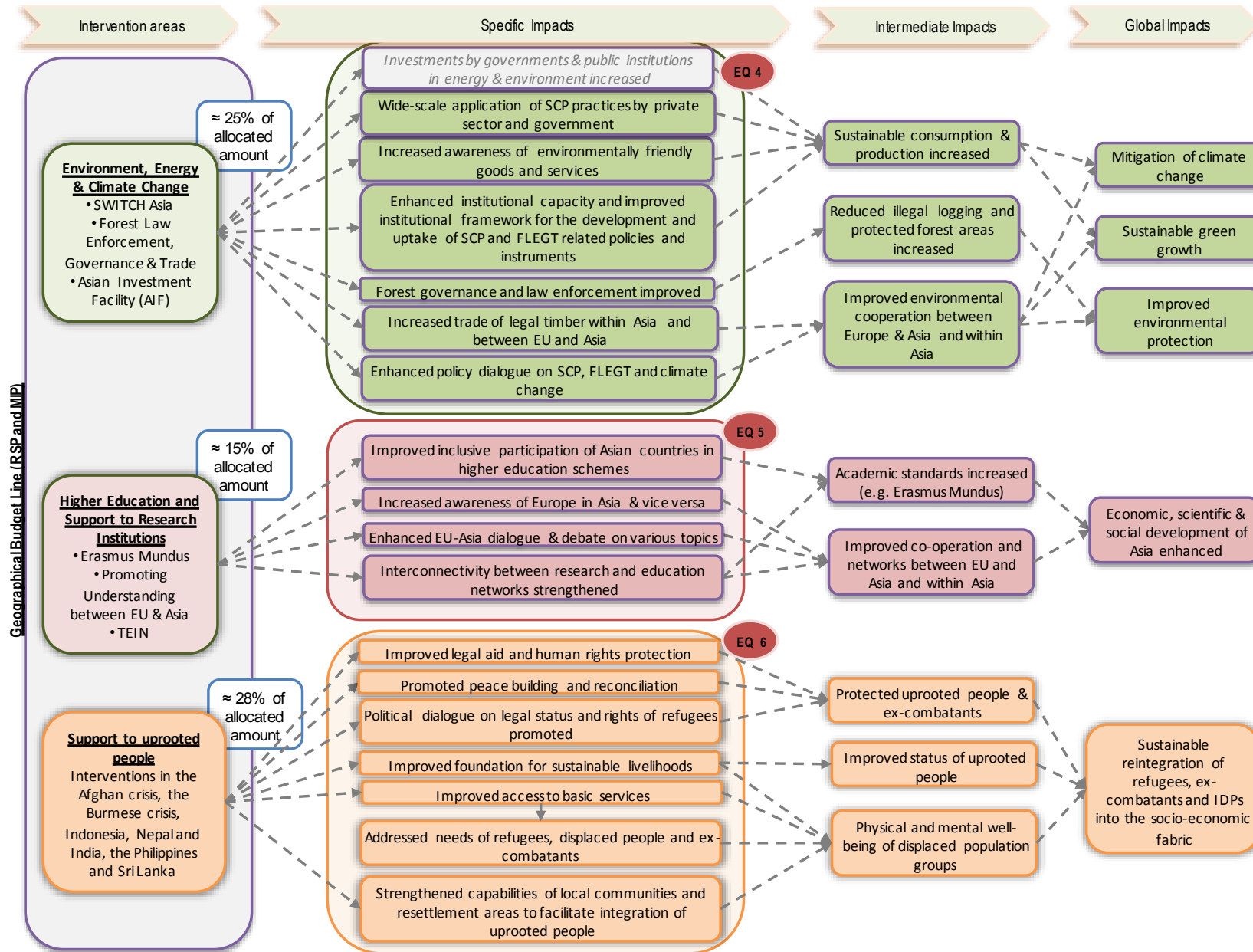
For higher education and support to research institutes, the intermediate impacts increased academic standards and improved co-operation and networks between EU and Asia and within Asia are expected to contribute directly to the economic, scientific and social development of Asia.

In the support to uprooted people strand, the protection, improved status, and physical and mental well-being of displaced population groups are expected to contribute to sustainable integration of refugees, returnees, ex-combatants and internally displaced people (IDPs) into the socio-economic fabric. In emphasising Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD), the strategy recognised that displacement is often a long-term phenomenon, and that solutions must be durable to be effective.

²⁵ Please refer to Annex 5 for the sector and faithful diagrams.

Figure 10 Global simplified reconstructed intervention logic





4 Answers to the Evaluation Questions

In accordance with the ToR, and as agreed in the structuring stage, the evaluation exercise is based on a reconstructed intervention logic and a structured process of defining Evaluation Questions (EQs).

In the end, **eight EQs** were formulated. These questions were selected with a view to covering, as far as reasonably possible, the various aspects of the intervention logic, but with a sharper focus on some specific aspects. The focus was directed at aspects that would provide information and analytical material contributing to an analysis of a number of issues that became apparent from desk work done during the production of the inception report, and from the inventory. For each EQ, a number of Judgement Criteria (JC) and Indicators were defined. The EQs were discussed and agreed upon with the Evaluation Unit and the Reference Group.

Table 6 The Evaluation Questions

No.	Evaluation Question	
EQ 1	To what extent has regional-level EU support to Asia broadened and deepened the dialogue between the two regions and encouraged greater integration and co-operation on political, economic, social and environmental matters?	Dialogue
EQ 2	To what extent has EU support Asia contributed to progress towards regional economic integration?	Sector results and impacts
EQ 3	To what extent has EU support to human security challenges strengthened regional problem-solving capacities?	
EQ 4	To what extent has the regional EU support to Asian key stakeholders contributed to enhancing the adaptation to and mitigation of climate change and the promotion of sustainable growth?	
EQ 5	To what extent has regional-level EU support to higher education institutions and networks in Asia and between Asia and Europe contributed to enhancing academic and research standards and to the internationalisation of universities in Asia?	
EQ 6	To what extent has regional-level EU support to uprooted people contributed to reintegrating refugees, returnees, ex-combatants and internally displaced people into the socio-economic fabric?	Relevance, 3Cs and added value
EQ 7	To what degree has the regional-level EU support been responsive to the priorities and needs of the key partners in Asia and in line with the overall EU development and policy framework?	
EQ 8	To what extent did the EU regional-level support add value to - and complemented – bilateral co-operation and the intervention of EU Member States?	

The EQs can also be linked to one or several of the five DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability), the coherence and EU added-value criteria, and other key issues (3Cs or cross-cutting issues) identified in the ToR of this evaluation. These linkages are illustrated in the following table, and further detailed in the individual EQs.

Table 7 Coverage of the evaluation criteria by the evaluation questions

Question	Evaluation criteria							Other key issues	
	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact	Sustainability	Coherence	Added value	3Cs	Cross-cutting issues
EQ1 on strengthening inter-regional dialogue & partnership	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓		✓✓
EQ2 on regional added value to economic integration		✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓		✓✓		
EQ3 on added value to regional integration in non-economic fields	✓✓✓	✓✓✓		✓✓✓					✓✓
EQ4 on environment, energy and climate change	✓✓	✓✓✓		✓✓	✓✓				
EQ5 on higher education	✓✓	✓✓✓		✓✓	✓✓✓				
EQ6 on support to uprooted people	✓✓	✓✓✓		✓✓✓	✓✓			✓✓	✓✓✓
EQ7 on regional strategy	✓✓✓					✓✓✓		✓✓✓	
EQ8 on added value	✓✓✓	✓✓				✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	

✓✓✓	The criterion is largely covered by the EQ
✓✓	The criterion is partially covered in the EQ

4.1 EQ1 on strengthening inter-regional dialogue & partnership

EQ1: To what extent has regional-level EU support to Asia broadened and deepened the dialogue between the two regions and encouraged greater integration and co-operation on political, economic, social and environmental matters?

Relations between the EU and Asian partners have long moved beyond traditional donor-recipient patterns and are characterised by equal partnership. Against this backdrop, the strengthening of dialogue mechanisms between Europe and Asia has been a key feature of the EU approach to co-operation. The oldest and most developed of the existing co-operation mechanisms with Asia is the multi-level EU-ASEAN dialogue.

In addition to the group-to-group dialogue between the EU and ASEAN, the ASEM has provided a forum for dialogue between Europeans and Asians since 1996. Together, the ASEM member countries represent around 58% of the world's population, half of global GDP, and more than 60% of international commerce. Heads of government meet every two years to set the agenda of ASEM, which was established to provide the structure for a regular policy dialogue among a highly diverse group of governments that do not necessarily share the same interests, strategies and priorities in international relations. ASEM offers its members the opportunity of carefully testing the waters for new initiatives that can later be followed up in smaller and more formalised diplomatic settings, either within the context of bilateral relations or less diverse multilateral groupings.

This EQ seeks to assess the extent to which the EU's external aid has contributed to the fostering of inter-regional dialogues and the strengthening of regional co-operation in the fields of economic and financial matters, employment, social policy, environment, and the promotion of cultural diversity, intercultural dialogues and research collaboration in relations between Europe and Asia. The question

covers interactions at both governmental and societal levels – that is, the EU-ASEAN dialogue, the *ASEM Dialogue Facility*, the *ASEF* programmes, and the *Trans-Eurasia Information Network (TEIN)*. The question also considers if, and to what extent, these dialogues and networks have increased awareness of Europe in Asia, and vice versa.

EQ1 – Overall assessment

Inter-regional co-operation between the EU and Asia has expanded and deepened during the period evaluated. EU funded or co-funded co-operation mechanisms, including the multi-level policy dialogue with ASEAN, ASEM in general and the ASEM Dialogue Facility in particular, as well as ASEF, has provided a suitable framework and fertile ground for the sharing of information and analysis. Through this, regional-level EU support has contributed to developing joint policy positions in EU-Asia relations and deliberations on responses to emerging challenges in political, economic, social and environmental fields. This process has been particularly successful where and when synergies between bilateral and multilateral policy dialogues were achieved, and when the two approaches mutually reinforced each other. However, this finding does not apply to EU-SAARC relations, which lack a dialogue setting comparable to EU-ASEAN relations. The EU stakeholders (EC and Member States) usually speak with one voice in dialogue relations with Asian counterparts, indicating a well co-ordinated EU position, and have thereby increased the leverage in crucial co-operation areas, such as generally governance and political matters (including human rights), security, and environment.

At the same time, the existence of policy dialogue mechanisms does not always translate into effectiveness of inter-regional exchanges. Furthermore, some studies suggest that the inter-regional meeting agenda is mainly driven by the EU, implying insufficient Asian inputs. While outputs of co-operation are well documented, hard evidence for impacts is rare. Evaluations and monitoring reports regularly find that policy dialogues are insufficiently aligned with individual interventions – for example, under the ASEM dialogue facility. The particular critical view emerged on ASEF based on a 2010-11 evaluation which suggested that ASEF largely failed to make a strategically well-planned and effective contribution to enhancing the multi-actor and multi-faceted co-operation processes in EU-Asia relations, as envisioned in the Regional Strategy. Significant changes have taken place since then, and stakeholder interviews left no doubt that ASEF successfully fulfils its mandate as the main institutionalised channel for civil society co-operation. Civil society participation could be considered the weakest element of EU-Asia dialogue relations and partnerships during the early days of the EU-Asia strategy. However, lessons have been learned and interventions that started more recently – such as ASEAN Regional Integration Support (ARISE) and the Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (READI) – provide more opportunities for civil society participation. Overall, EU support has facilitated links among civil society stakeholders and between civil society and governments, most prominently within the context of ASEF and the ASEM Dialogue Facility, but there is only very limited evidence for a judgement on the effectiveness of civil society engagement. However, this is due to a lack of information (i.e. insufficient attention given to this aspect in evaluation and monitoring reports) and does not point to a deficiency in EU-Asia relations.

Overall, the EU-Asia inter-regional dialogue and partnership comprise of a network of multi-level co-operation mechanisms and interventions that are, as individual actions, highly relevant in response to the Asia strategy, and generally well-aligned with the strategy. However, while co-ordination has improved in the duration of the strategy, activities are still often conducted in parallel and are not well linked and connected. There is hardly any exchange happening among programmes geared towards the strengthening of regional dialogues in mainly non-economic areas – that is, *ASEF*, *TEIN*, *READI* and the *EU-Asia Dialogue* project.

Quantity and quality of existing policy dialogues and partnerships inevitably depends on the institutional development and maturity of the partners. Most activities have centred on ASEAN/Southeast Asia, while SAARC hardly features with regard to many areas of the Regional Strategy. The strong focus on Southeast Asia is unsurprising – and justified – given the long history of effective co-operation between the EU and ASEAN, dating back to the early 1970s. In contrast, EU-SAARC co-operation was initiated only in 1996, and the RSP admits that “*the development of concrete intervention has been slow*” (p. 7). The RSP presented an ambitious agenda for EU-SAARC co-operation, but this did not materialise to the extent envisioned in the RSP. The approach to SAARC was consequently revised, based on the MTR 2010. However, there is no doubt that policy dialogues have strengthened the relevance and effectiveness of co-operation in EU-Asia relations.

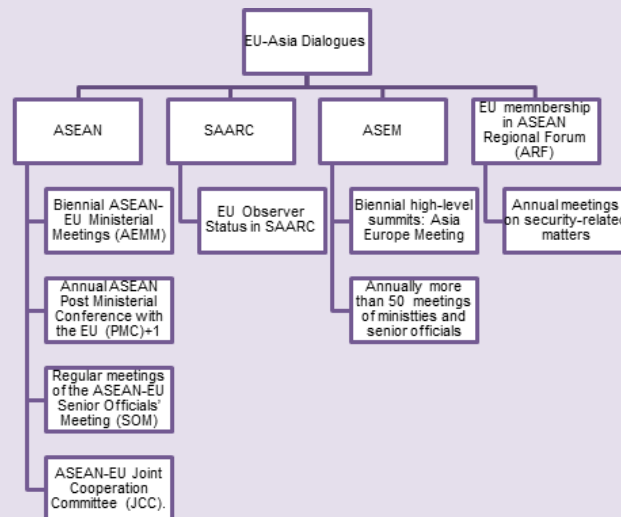
Strengths and Weaknesses of Policy Dialogues

Political and policy dialogues play an important part in the Regional Strategy, as confirmed by the MTR/MIP of the Asia RSP: “Recognising that EU policies other than development co-operation can have a substantial impact on our partner countries, relevant policies are systematically included in dialogues with our partners in the region to ensure policy coherence for development.” (p. 12). According to this approach, policy dialogues as “non-spending activities”, and development co-operation ideally reinforces each other to deepen Asia-Europe relations and to broaden their thematic spectrum. Over the years, dialogue relations have significantly expanded to cover a wide range of areas, including political and security, economic and trade, social and cultural agendas. However, dialogues are rarely looked at in programme and strategy evaluations. Therefore, the following short assessment provides an overview of tangible achievements, but also prevailing challenges, in EU-Asia dialogue relations during the period 2007-2013. It is based on interviews and group discussions conducted with senior officials in Brussels, at ASEAN, and in the countries selected for the field phase. Hence, the following “case study” is a reflection of the views of European and Asian stakeholders actively involved in dialogue relations.

Box 2 Case Study: Policy Dialogues – the view of senior officials

The prominent position of Asia in the EU’s external relations dates back to the formalisation of EC-ASEAN relations in 1977, and especially the signing of the ASEAN-EC Co-operation Agreement in Kuala Lumpur in 1980. It was the first international treaty that the then European Community signed with any other regional organisation. Of particular importance was the statement in the agreement that “such co-operation will be between equal partners”. Closely connected with – but formally independent from – the EU-ASEAN dialogue is the ASEM, which aims to strengthen the relationship and increase mutual understanding between the two regions, in a spirit of mutual respect and equal partnership. The EU is also a member of ARF, which was founded in 1994 and meets annually to discuss security-relevant developments in the Asia-Pacific region. The most recent addition to the dialogue relations with Asia is the EU’s status as an observer in SAARC, which was granted in 2006. The importance of policy dialogues is stressed in core documents, such as the MTR/MIP of the Asia RSP in 2010, “EU-Asia relations are expanding, and the EU is seeking an increasingly close relationship with Asia, going beyond traditional co-operation, to encompass economic integration and political co-operation” (p. 4).

Figure 11 Main Pillars of the EU Asia Dialogue System



There was broad agreement among Asian and European stakeholders that the embeddedness of development co-operation in well-established political dialogue mechanisms has increased the EU’s weight and leverage in Asia – particularly with regard to key EU agendas, such as good governance and human rights – and has strengthened the EU’s visibility in Asia. For example, the fact that ASEAN officials consider the EU as ASEAN’s most relevant and trusted partner is not only the result of the sizable development co-operation programme; it is also, to a large extent, a reflection of the long history of regular high-level political exchanges, and especially the way that the EU has been consistent in its strategic approach towards ASEAN. In other words, development co-operation and policy dialogues have been treated as the two sides of the same coin to promote a multi-level and holistic agenda in inter-regional relations, which – in its breadth – is unique among ASEAN’s partners, including the US,

Canada, Australia, Japan, China and Russia. As a result, the EU has also successfully promoted European “*best practices*” in areas such as regional economic integration, climate change, environmental sustainability, and disaster preparedness.

Senior officials almost unanimously identified the Nuremberg Declaration on an EU-ASEAN Enhanced Partnership, adopted in 2007, as the most significant milestone of recent dialogue relations, providing a solid basis for EU-ASEAN co-operation. The Declaration sets out the long-term vision and commitment of both sides, and has provided the basis for the strengthening of co-operation in newly-emerging fields such as energy security. The Nuremberg Declaration has been further extended and deepened by the Bandar Seri Begawan Plan of Action to Strengthen the ASEAN-EU Enhanced Partnership (2013-2017), which adds or strengthens “*gender equality, well-being of women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities and migrant workers*”, “*building together disaster-resilient communities*” and co-operation in “*Science and Technology (S&T)*” as central action points.

In comparison, the institutionalisation of EU-SAARC dialogue relations is still at the very early stages. However, there was broad agreement that EU observer status – which entitles the EU to attend the summit meetings of the SAARC head of state and government and, the accreditation of the Head of the EUD in Nepal to SAARC – has opened an important window of opportunity for the strengthening of EU-SAARC relations, although this has not yet been used to its full possible extent. SAARC and EU officials identified the rather low-level representation of the EU in meetings with SAARC as an irritating factor. As a high-ranking EU official pointed out, “a lot of time and effort went into achieving observer status, and then we don’t send the appropriate people to meetings”. Very similar concerns were voiced with regard to ASEAN-EU relations and ASEM summits. In both cases, Asian representatives have often been more senior than their European counterparts – a fact that has displeased Asian governments. The ASEAN-EU Commemorative Summit in Singapore on 22 November 2007, marking the 30th anniversary of the establishment of official relations, was a case in point. The summit was planned to be held at the level of heads of state and government, but – unlike the ASEAN states - only a small majority of EU member states were represented accordingly. Participants referred to a major embarrassment for the EU and to a “loss of face” for Singapore. This still resonates negatively in EU-ASEAN diplomacy today.

Other stumbling blocks in EU-Asia dialogue relations have been the Myanmar question, and – according both to Asian and European interviewees – unrealistic expectations and a lack of flexibility on some occasions. Markedly different European and Asian views on how to deal with Myanmar had been a constant thorn in the side of EU-ASEAN relations and within ASEM, and also played a part in the failure of free trade negotiations between the EU and ASEAN. Officials mentioned that – due to the opening-up and process of political liberalisation in Myanmar – this was now much less of a factor than previously, but said that diverging viewpoints still played a role in political dialogues. The notion of unrealistic expectations refers mainly to EU-SAARC relations where both sides underestimated existing hurdles and challenges and tried to “start too big”, as one senior official summarised the problem. Lack of willingness to compromise on both sides was mentioned as a factor in the stalled negotiations for the EU-ASEAN FTA and the unsuccessful attempt to enshrine the EU-ASEAN co-operation programme in a memorandum of understanding. Instead, a less formal version, under the title “EC-ASEAN Co-operation during the Period 2011-2013”, became part of the MTR/MIP of the Asia RSP in 2010 (see Annex VII).

A certain amount of disappointment was evident in many conversations about ASEM. According to several interviewees, ASEM has not fulfilled expectations as “*Europe’s main multilateral channel for communication with Asia*”, as the EU put it in a factsheet on ASEM that was circulated until 2010. Officials with insight knowledge of ASEM mentioned that co-operation had become very technical and that too much time had been devoted to the drafting of formal statements, rather than the promotion of the co-operation agenda. For example, in the key area of economic co-operation, progress was hindered by the fact that no meeting of the ASEM economic ministers has taken place since 2003. Some interviewees also stressed the necessity for a tighter ASEM strategy, particularly against the backdrop of the forum’s heterogeneity (ASEM currently has 51 members). However, there was strong agreement that the ASEM progress has facilitated interaction among civil society actors from both continents – centred on ASEF – in a way that it had never been possible prior to ASEM. Some referred to the constructive and highly visible multi-level civil society dialogue in EU-Asia relations as one of ASEM’s most valuable achievements.

4.1.1 JC 11: Degree to which regional-level EU support to Asia has deepened the inter-regional exchange of information and analysis

This JC assesses three key aspects that potentially form the basis for a deepening and strengthening of inter-regional exchanges. It first looks at the effectiveness of existing mechanisms for consultation and collaboration in EU-Asia relations with regard to key policy areas. It then assesses the degree to which joint policy positions in the fields of environment, education and socio-economic development have emerged as a result of existing dialogues and partnerships. Finally, the JC addresses the question of whether, and to what extent, coherent and co-ordinated positions of the EU and MS in inter-regional dialogues between Europe and Asia have emerged.

The strongest evidence of effective, results-oriented mechanisms for inter-regional consultations in key policy areas (*Indicator 111*) is found in the case of EU-ASEAN relations. The final report of the “Thematic Global Evaluation of European Union’s Support to Trade-related Assistance in Third Countries”, vol. 1. (2013) describes ASEAN as “a model case”.

Box 3 Policy dialogues on Trade-Related Assistance

“It is a particular strong feature of the [EU-ASEAN] co-operation that TRA projects run in parallel, and are co-ordinated, with a high-profile political dialogue on economic co-operation. The EC participates in a series of consultative meetings with ASEAN which includes the ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting (AEMM), ASEAN-EU Economic Ministers Meeting, ASEAN-EU Senior Officials Meeting, the Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC) and the Joint Co-operation Committee (JCC) Meeting. These meetings offer opportunities for the EU and ASEAN to review their relations in the fields of economic and development co-operation affecting the two sides. The ASEAN-Brussels Committee, ASEAN-Berlin Committee, ASEAN-London Committee and ASEAN-Paris Committee also assist in conducting and maintaining the dialogue with the EU. At the apex of the dialogue process is the AEMM, which sets the direction and pace of the dialogue and reviews, inter alia, the economic and functional co-operation between the two sides.”

Source: Thematic Global Evaluation of European Commission’s Support to Trade-related Assistance in Third Countries, Field visit report ASEAN, July 2012, pp. 19, 21.

The 2009 Evaluation of the EC’s co-operation with ASEAN, Vol 1, arrived at similar conclusions, stating that EU support for participation in ASEAN policy dialogues had increased the capacity of less developed member states to deal with regional economic integration. Furthermore, policy dialogue with ASEAN “has proven to be a nimble instrument for incorporating emerging issues” (Vol. 2, p. 87).

Overall, the fact that ASEAN officials consider the EU as ASEAN’s most relevant and trusted partner is not only the result of the sizable development co-operation programme. It is also, to a large extent, a reflection of the long history of regular high-level political exchanges, and especially the way that the EU has been consistent in its strategic approach towards ASEAN. Development co-operation and policy dialogues have been treated as the two sides of the same coin to promote a multi-level and holistic agenda in inter-regional relations, which – in its breadth – is unique among ASEAN’s partners, including the US, Canada, Australia, Japan, China and Russia. As a result, the EU has also successfully promoted European “best practices” in areas such as regional economic integration, climate change, environmental sustainability, and disaster preparedness.

Mechanisms for dialogue are evident across the entire portfolio of EU-ASEAN co-operation, as confirmed, for example in the case of *READI*. However, in these and other cases comprehensive evidence is mainly available for the existence of well-established policy dialogue mechanisms, but not always for the actual outcomes and effectiveness of these dialogues. ASEM is a case in point.

According to the logframe, the purpose of the *ASEM Dialogue Facility IV* is to “enhance result-oriented political dialogue and co-operation in the framework of ASEM process ... priority areas” – including, for example, economic and financial matters, as well as environment, energy security, and sustainable development. However, the related “objectively verifiable indicator of achievement” is simply not sufficiently specific (“*Outcomes of the ASEM dialogue and their relevance*”) to allow for any monitoring of effectiveness. Information is mainly available on outputs. There is ample evidence (such as through interviews, evaluations and academic studies (see Vol 2 for details) for the existence of multi-level exchanges of ideas and analysis as a contribution to key agendas in dialogue relations between Europe and Asia – especially in the areas of employment and social inclusion, environment and climate change, and education and culture. The Dialogue Facility – and, in a similar vein, ASEM – provide forums for dialogue and networking mainly through the organisation of conferences. While this can be considered as a value added to high-level political and diplomatic relations (“track one”) in EU-Asia

relations, the specific impact of (mainly academic) conferences on diplomacy cannot be assessed in a hard empirical way.

A recent project, “*Shaping a Common Future for Europe and Asia – Sharing Policy Innovation and Best Practices in Addressing Common Challenges*” (January 2012-December 2014, co-funded by the EU under the budget line *Pilot Actions and Preparatory Action*), aims to fill the gaps in the existing interventions – particularly in terms of bridging inter-regional research collaboration and policy dialogues. There is some initial indication that this new “*EU-Asia Dialogue*” is likely to contribute to policy formulation in EU-Asia relations, although this is difficult to quantify.

The EU has had SAARC Observer Status since 2006, but a policy dialogue comparable to the one in EU-ASEAN relations does not exist. The 2010 MTR of the EU-Asia RSP 2007-2013 simply states: “*The policy agendas and sectoral dialogues with individual countries, ASEM, ASEAN and SAARC cover all themes and strategic EU priorities*” (p. 7), but also notes that EU “*direct co-operation with SAARC is seriously hampered*” (p. 9). There is some mention of policy dialogues in bilateral relations with SAARC Member States, but no assessment of results and effectiveness is available. (*Indicator 111*)

Documents and stakeholder interviews also reveal that the formation of joint policy positions on key development agendas (environment, education, socio-economic development) in EU-Asia relations is most visible in the case of EU-ASEAN relations and of ASEM, but is absent from EU-SAARC relations, which lack an institutionalised policy dialogue mechanism. The multi-level nature of the EU-ASEAN dialogue provides a suitable and tested framework for an effective discussion and, partly, harmonisation of policy positions in relations between EU and ASEAN stakeholders. Higher education (HE) is a good example: the policy-making and policy dialogue instruments are creating spaces for HE policy-makers from both the EU and ASEAN to deliberate on pressing HE issues (Evaluation of EC co-operation with ASEAN, Vol 2, 2009, p. 62). However, the identification of common interest in relations between the EU and Asian partners does not necessarily equate to an implementable joint policy agenda. This is particularly evident for ASEM.

As the only inter-governmental dialogue forum in relations between Europe and Asia, ASEM has provided a relevant and effective framework for the identification and discussion of important development agendas. Joint policy positions are regularly presented in the ASEM chair’s statement at the conclusion of the summit meetings, but these documents are of a general and declaratory nature. While they outline a common agenda in relations between European and Asian governments, they do not necessarily set a framework for actual policy responses to the identified challenges. The shaping of a more specific policy agenda takes place at sub-ordinated meetings, including meetings of line ministers.

However, given ASEM’s heterogeneous membership structure and the inevitably diverse interests of the member states, agreement on joint policy positions is usually not a straightforward process. Several academic studies analysing ASEM have complemented the information available in official documents and evaluation reports. Academic studies also tend to take a more critical perspective as to what ASEM can achieve with regard to the setting of a joint European-Asian Policy Agenda. For example, a study by Evi Fitriani (2011) found that a certain degree of “*polarisation between Asian and European groups in the ASEM or ASEM meetings, caused by political issues and colonial memory, contributed to the difficulties in trust-building between Asian and European participants*”. The ASEM Evaluation (2011) is even more critical, indicating that ASEM’s contribution to the formation of policy positions has been hindered by structural deficiencies within ASEM. According to that evaluation, there is no detailed analysis or strategy on how to address the key result areas with a multi-actor stakeholder clientele and with multi-faceted processes. Moreover, expectations as to what ASEM can and should deliver are often not realistic. ASEM was established with a clear mandate to promote “*intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchange*”. It was not designed as – and never intended to be – a clearing house or secretariat for ASEM that acts as a co-ordinating body, in the sense that all civil society processes emanating from the ASEM dialogue would be steered and managed through ASEM following a strategic master plan.

While the influence of Asian members – particularly China in ASEM (as the result of increasing budget contributions) – has grown, it seems that the *ASEM Dialogue Facility*, has not been sufficiently driven by Asian partners – even though it is supposed to contribute to achieving strategic objectives of ASEM, and thereby the RSP. The MTE of the ASEM Dialogue Facility and stakeholder interviews point to a mismatch between the RSP strategy and its implementation. While the Dialogue Facility is based on the proposition that activities are selected at the request of Asian countries, the more common practice is that projects are selected by the DG, in consultation with Asian ASEM partners. The

MTE expressed concern that “the focus of ASEM Dialogue Facility financed activity is not sufficiently closely aligned to Asian needs” (p. 34). (*Indicator 112*)

Evidence of coherent and co-ordinated positions of the EU and Member States in inter-regional dialogues between Europe and Asia is found across all dialogue mechanisms at the inter-governmental level (ASEAN-EU, ASEM, EU-SAARC, ARF). The views and positions of all participating European stakeholders, including the EU and Member States, are harmonised *ex ante*. The EU generally speaks with one voice in inter-regional meetings. Resulting statements, declarations and other official documents, which are usually co-ordinated by the EU, always refer to EU positions rather than individual positions of the EU and/or Member States. Seen from this angle, there is a coordinated EU position in every official document. However, this does not mean that all EU MS follow the same policies and interests in Asia-Europe relations. Despite all the progress achieved in integrating the EU members’ external policies, national differences still clearly come to the fore as far as the key orientations and points of emphasis in their foreign policies are concerned. These differences are reflected also in the role ASEM takes in the policies of various European partners. (*Indicator 113*)

4.1.2 **JC 12: Extent to which regional-level EU support to Asia has strengthened the problem-solving capacities of Asian partners in economic, socio-political and environmental fields**

This JC addresses the extent to which *inter-regional dialogues and partnerships* have contributed to improved problem-solving capacities of Asian governments and their agencies. The JC does not elaborate in detail the contributions made by sector-specific co-operation programmes (such as *APRIS II*, *ARISE*, *ECAP III*, *READI*, *EU-South Asia Civil Aviation Co-operation*, *FLEGT*), which are discussed under EQs 2-6 and only mentioned here in case of inter-linkages with dialogue mechanisms. Overall, availability of evidence is mixed. It is strongest in the case of increasing cross-border co-operation on research and education matters, as this has been the main focal point of TEIN, which has been successful overall and has achieved most of its objectives, according to evaluations.

New or improved inter-regional and regional mechanisms have evolved to address economic and financial challenges, but the evidence is mainly based on information regarding outputs; not much analysis is available on the effectiveness of these mechanisms.

The “*Plan of Action to Implement the Nuremberg Declaration on the EU ASEAN Enhanced Partnership*” (2007), which has guided EU-ASEAN political relations during the period evaluated, re-emphasised the centrality of existing and new programmes in support of capacity building – for example, *APRIS*, *READI*, *TREATI*, *EC-ASEAN Standards, Quality and Conformity Assessment Programme*.²⁶ Senior officials interviewed during the field phase almost unanimously identified the *Nuremberg Declaration* as the most significant milestone of recent dialogue relations, providing a solid basis for EU-ASEAN co-operation.

The clearest evidence for improved mechanisms in response to economic and financial challenges exists for individual ASEAN members – for example, Thailand and Laos. In contrast, there is no detailed assessment available for the potential enhancement of regional and inter-regional response mechanisms through ASEM policy dialogues or projects implemented under the ASEM dialogue facility. Existing reports mainly disseminate information about discussions held. (*Indicator 121*)

With regard to the existence of effective inter-regional and regional consultation processes to respond to socio-economic challenges, a wide range of documents and stakeholder interviews confirm that socio-economic issues have been discussed extensively in EU-ASEAN and ASEM meetings at various levels. They have also been taken up by ASEF – for example, on economic challenges facing Asia and Europe. However, these activities do not amount to actual solutions in response to challenges. There are only implicit hints that allow for some assessment of effectiveness. For example, findings of the *ASEM Dialogue Facility* MTE suggest that projects under the DF, which tend to have a strong focus on socio-economic agendas in many cases, have not achieved a high degree of effectiveness in advancing the inter-regional collaboration on these issues. (*Indicator 122*)

With regard to the institutional deepening of regional co-operation in response to environmental challenges, evidence is weak and available only in isolated cases, including bilateral negotiations with In-

²⁶ One of the proposed pillars, the ASEAN-EU FTA (“*Negotiate and conclude the ASEAN-EU FTA aiming at mutually beneficial FTA while taking into account the different levels of development and capacity of the individual ASEAN Member Countries to carry out comprehensive trade and investment liberalisation and facilitation*”), eventually did not materialise, but resulted in the intervention “*Enhancing ASEAN Free Trade Agreement Negotiation Capacity*”, which began its work in early 2012.

Indonesia, in the context of the Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA). These negotiations provided a framework for policy dialogue on timber trade, illegal logging and sustainable forestry, and led to the establishment of a Joint Preparatory Committee, which will meet on a regular basis.

The evaluation of ASEF praises its contribution to advancing the environmental agenda. Reportedly ASEF events through the Asia Europe Environment Forum (ENVforum) were able to set “*clear policy recommendations and high practical and theoretical approaches to be used as reference for ASEM and international thinktanks*”. The ENVforum also succeeded in organising internal strategic and operational planning, as well as institutionalised internal quality control through a quality control group, a technical advisory and supervisory committee (p. 18). (*Indicator 123*)

Extensive evidence of growing cross-border co-operation on research and education matters is available for TEIN, which was established precisely for this purpose. According to the programme's self-assessment, TEIN “*is highly regarded by ASEM partners as a major success story*”. The Evaluation of TEIN 2 and 3 comes to similarly positive conclusions, indicating that “*It is evident ... that TEIN3 is an important part of the EU's dialogue with Asia under the ASEM framework. ...*”. It also says that TEIN contributed to the creation and expansion of national R&E networks, played a role in the development of national telecommunications policies, and had a strong focus on cross-cutting issues (such as gender, environment), and climate change

The Evaluation also points out that TEIN2 and TEIN3 “*have had high visibility at ASEM meetings*”. Equally important, the Asian National Research and Education Network (NREN) – through which each partner country participates in TEIN – “*have close links to their national governments and are therefore in a position to influence decision-making*”. Research collaboration has also been promoted by READI, and seems to get more prominent attention in more recent projects. (*Indicator 124*)

4.1.3 JC 13: Degree to which regional-level EU support to Asia has strengthened links between civil societies and Governments in Asia and civil society exchange between Asia and Europe and within Asia.

This JC assesses the degree to which EU support has contributed to a stronger involvement of civil society stakeholders in the process of shaping policy options on key development agendas. Specific emphasis is given to the contribution of civil societies to the increased quantity and quality of research collaboration, and to increasing awareness of Europe in Asia, and vice versa. At the centre of civil society exchanges stands the ASEF programme, which, together with the ASEM Dialogue Facility and TEIN, forms one of the main actions under support to ASEM. ASEF was tasked to play a role “*as an effective institution promoting intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges between Asia and Europe*” (RSP 2007-2013, p. 10). There is ample evidence from numerous sources (such as interviews, the ASEF evaluation and ASEF ROM report) that ASEF has fulfilled this mandate.

However, until very recently, there was limited evidence for increased voice and participation of Asian civil society organisations on key development agendas in Europe-Asia dialogues, even if the private sector is subsumed under civil society. In the case of ASEAN, the TRA Evaluation notes that consultations with private sector actors (mainly business organisations) took place in the process of drafting and implementing new regional standards, but institutionalised effective mechanism for regional consultations with non-state actors did not exist on a permanent basis and were not a default approach for EU projects. In a similar vein, the MTR of APRIS II suggests that civil society participation was limited. This also applies to other interventions. However, these recommendations have now been addressed and there is a stronger focus on civil society participation in ARISE than there was in APRIS II. Although the first six-month report (April to September 2012) of READI does not mention civil society involvement or participation in any activity, stakeholder interviews demonstrated that project activities in most of READI's nine focal areas have had input from non-state actors. As the civil society arm of ASEM, the strengthening of civil society participation in Europe-Asia relations is at the core of ASEF's mandate. The ROM of the Third Phase of Community Support to ASEF, 2009, confirms that “*ASEF is providing a neutral platform for civil society dialogue in the complex cultural framework of Asia-Europe relations*”. The ASEF Evaluation of 2011 generally indicates that civil society participation has been successful in cases where ASEM and ASEF have interacted, but also concludes that ASEF is not covering its whole mandate, as civil society partnerships in the key thematic area of Economy and Society are largely non-existent. The field phase confirmed that this focal point has now been added to the ASEF agenda. (*Indicator 131*)

On the matter of increased quantity and quality of research collaboration, both the desk and field phases revealed that research collaboration essentially takes place at the level of civil society within the framework of EU-funded activities in the higher education sector, as elaborated on in detail under

EQ6. At the same time, interventions in other sectors can potentially play a contributing role. However, *APRIS*, *ARISE*, *ECAP*, and most other interventions in support of ASEAN and SAARC, have not strongly encouraged or fostered research collaboration between Europe and Asia. The exceptions in this regard are the *ASEM Dialogue Facility* and *ASEF* and also – to some extent – *READI*, especially in its focal area “*Science and Technology*”. However, evidence is slender. (*Indicator 133*)

Evidence of increased awareness of Europe in Asia, and vice versa, as the result of civil society interactions is equally rare. Neither the *ASEF* evaluation nor any other studies and documents provides hard evidence for increased awareness. The *ASEF* evaluation of 2011 includes some generally relevant observations that were confirmed in stakeholder interviews: *ASEF* is characterised by “*uniqueness, continued relevance and strong potential added value as a facilitator of bi-directional civil society policy dialogue between Asia and Europe*” and good alignment of its activities with the overall inter-governmental (track one) ASEM dialogue process. (*Indicator 134*)

4.2 EQ2 on regional added value to economic integration

EQ2: To what extent has EU support in Asia contributed to progress towards regional economic integration?

EU support to regional integration initiatives is multi-faceted. Political support and sharing of experience with regional economic communities via policy dialogues (such as the EU-ASEAN dialogue, which dates back to 1972) is one aspect. Financial support through development co-operation is another. Direct EU support for regional economic integration in Asia has its roots in the EU-ASEAN Co-operation Agreement, which was signed at the Second ASEAN-EEC Ministerial Meeting (AEMM) in Kuala Lumpur in 1980. Under the Agreement, objectives for commercial, economic and technical co-operation were established, and a Joint Co-operation Committee (JCC) was formed as a mechanism to monitor ASEAN-EU co-operation. Technical assistance was one of the three areas emphasised, the other two being commercial co-operation and economic co-operation. Since then, several new strategies and communications have broadened the scope of the EU’s engagement with regional partners, aimed at a deepening of regional integration agendas, such as establishing the implementation of regional free trade areas, the harmonisation of customs regimes, the promotion of regional Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (SPS) and Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) regimes, and the support of the ASEAN and SAARC secretariats as co-ordinating bodies in the respective integration processes

The RSP 2007-2013 explicitly states that the encouragement of greater regional integration and co-operation through the support of ASEAN and SAARC is a main strategic objective. The EU is potentially in a good position to support processes of regional integration elsewhere. The 2013 “Thematic Global Evaluation of European Union’s Support to Trade-related Assistance in Third Countries” outlines that, as the most advanced case of regional economic integration, the EU is seen as the main source of concrete experiences in other parts of the world. While the EU is not necessarily always regarded as a direct model for regional economic integration, it is perceived as an important reference point for regional communities in Asia, as well as in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.

Under the RSP, the total financial support for regional integration (ASEAN, SAARC and ASEM), which also includes non-economic agendas, amounted to EUR 78 million during 2007-2010, with an indicative EUR 63 million for 2011-13 (20% of the total allocation in both cases).

This EQ seeks to address the various aspects of support to regional economic integration: the development of the legal and regulatory framework of regional integration initiatives (such as new trade protocols or annexes to existing agreements) and their implementation at the regional and member state levels. Thereby, the EQ assesses the EU contribution both to capacity building and to increasing the regional flow of goods and services. It also asks to what extent the multi-level support to regional economic integration has established the EU as an important and trusted source of expertise on regional integration matters.

EQ2 – Overall assessment

Between 2007 and 2013, the EU has made a significant and effective contribution to regional economic integration in Southeast Asia. This has been achieved through targeted technical support to the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint and multi-level capacity building at regional and national levels. Of particular importance has been the EU support to the emergence and implementation of regional standards, preferential trading agreements, customs harmonisation, regional statistics, and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). In most cases, a substantial EU contribution in

EQ2 – Overall assessment

the aforementioned areas is evident, both qualitatively (based on the assessments in previous evaluations and in interviews) and quantitatively (based on data and surveys). Furthermore, the EU is seen as ASEAN's most trusted and relevant partner, given the importance of the European integration process as a reference point (but not necessarily a model) for ASEAN's own regional integration. While past evaluation reports have often pointed to a certain disconnect between regional and national-level interventions, and a lack of focus on the capacity gaps in some ASEAN Member States (AMS), the EU has pro-actively addressed these shortcomings during the latter phase of the strategy. Regional and bilateral programmes (for example, ARISE at the regional level, and bilateral TRA interventions in the ASEAN Member States) are now better linked and connected to increase synergies. At the same time, a stronger explicit focus on the CLMV (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam) countries has emerged to address their particular needs in the process of deepening regional economic integration.

The vast majority of Interventions have focused on ASEAN. With regard to fostering regional economic integration, the Asia Strategy is essentially a follow-up to the previous ASEAN RSP 2005-2006, but adds little value for the EU's regional co-operation with Asia in a broader sense. The EU had planned to provide some modest support – in comparison to support for ASEAN – to regional integration in SAARC, but was unable to secure agreement from the SAARC Member States, particularly India. The *EU-South Asia Civil Aviation Programme*, which initially proved more feasible and enjoyed the strong support of SAARC member states, was terminated after about one year of implementation. The stronger emphasis on ASEAN is a logical consequence of the fact that ASEAN – unlike SAARC – has been one of the EU's key partners in Asia, and indeed in the world, for four decades. Yet, in several key parts of the strategy paper, ASEAN and SAARC are de facto presented as equal partners of the EU, and the Strategy does not fully appreciate that it makes sense to provide support to regional economic integration only where such integration is actually part of the region's and respective countries' own core strategy. This approach was partly corrected by the MTR, which acknowledged that direct support to SAARC had to be scaled down and re-focused to support mini-lateral cross-border activities of two or more SAARC members.

According to the RSP, ASEM, the related *ASEM Dialogue Facility (DF)* and *ASEF* were supposed to play a prominent role in the EU's efforts to strengthen regional economic integration across Asia, but this was not initially the case. The reason is simple: such a focus was not in the interest of the majority of ASEM members, and neither was economic integration an agreed focal point of ASEF's mandate and activities. Interests have changed, however, and a stronger input of ASEM-ASEF in this area has emerged since about 2011.

4.2.1 JC 21: Degree to which regional EU-level support facilitated the development and conclusion of regional legal and institutional architecture, addressing key issues for economic integration

In line with practically all major programme and strategy evaluations of the last few years, the evaluation reveals that the EU has made a significant and effective contribution to the strengthening of the legal and institutional settings that form the pillars of economic integration in ASEAN. The EU regional-level support has addressed the crucial and central agendas in this process – such as standards, SPS, IPR, statistics – and thereby has helped ASEAN move closer to achieving the vision of the ASEAN Economic Community 2015. However, EU efforts under the Asia Strategy have overwhelmingly focused on Southeast Asia, with other sub-regions not benefiting to the same extent.

EU-supported regional trade and investment policy strategies are in place and embedded in a coordinated agenda for implementation, particularly as a result of *APRIS II* and *ECAP*. *APRIS II* contributed to the preparation of common regulatory regimes – such as in cosmetics and in electrical and electronic equipment (EEE). It also contributed to the preparation and adoption of common trade documents, such as ASEAN Harmonised Tariff Nomenclature (AHTN) and ASEAN Customs Declaration Document (ACDD).

Several legal and regulatory adjustments resulted from the EU's interventions, and these have been pivotal in developing an improved and modernised operational environment for trade at national or regional level. *ARISE*, which started in 2012, builds on *APRIS II*, while also introducing new activities. It has further developed the EU approach to the strengthening of ASEAN customs systems, and pilot projects in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand will be implemented, taking into account lessons learned from *APRIS II*.

Overall, the EU has followed a comprehensive multi-level strategy to TRA for ASEAN. Previous evaluations and stakeholder interviews confirm that TRA activities have successfully used multiple channels to promote regional integration and trade. However, the evaluation also notes that TRA interventions have given insufficient attention to the right balance and effective co-ordination between regional-level support to the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) and bilateral projects in ASEAN member states (AMS). Several other evaluations (e.g. CLE Philippines, ASEAN evaluation, and, perhaps most importantly, the MTR of the RSP 2007-2013) have come to similar conclusions. While stressing the effectiveness of EU TRA, they identified shortcomings with regard to the embeddedness of regional- and national-level strategies in a co-ordinated agenda for implementation. However, interviews conducted in Jakarta in August 2013 indicated that this shortcoming was addressed towards the end of the strategy. This was also confirmed by the Survey of the EU Delegations. Regional and bilateral programmes – for example, ARISE at the regional level, and TRA projects in individual AMS – are now much better linked and connected. Regular communication between the respective project team leaders and also managers takes place, and the potential for the creation of synergies has grown. However, the two-year gap between the completion of *APRIS II* and the beginning of *ARISE* – which was mainly due to delays in the decision-making and administrative processes in Brussels - resulted in a slowing down of customs reforms. Since ASEAN was not in the position to raise its own funds for the continuation of *APRIS*-initiated activities, little progress was made during the two-year period. .

In view of the fact that “*Global economic issues and issues relating to Asian integration are central issues in ASEM dialogue*” (ASEM DF MTE, 2011), it is surprising that few projects funded by the ASEM DF have focused on regional integration. Only two conferences, both in 2008, explicitly addressed this topic. None of the activities funded under the ASEM DF II, III and IV had any direct relation with regional economic integration or even macroeconomic issues in general. The main reason was a lack of demand. The *ASEM DF* was designed to support ASEM dialogues “*in areas selected at the request of Asian countries*”. Hence, it can be concluded that projects in the field of economic regional intergration had not been requested. This was not anticipated by the RSP, which places “economic and financial matters” at the top of the list of topics for dialogue (p. 10).

SAARC Member States have not received EU support to foster regional integration, as confirmed by stakeholder interviews and the Survey of EU Delegations. Although funds were committed in 2007 for EU-SAARC Economic Co-operation, and efforts were made by the EU to safeguard the project, SAARC Member States did not empower the SAARC Secretariat to sign the Financing Agreement. (*Indicator 211*).

The RSP established SAARC as a central partner for the EU – at the same level as ASEAN. It stated: “*Regional Co-operation during 2007-2013 will focus on three priority areas: 1) Support to Regional Integration, the key dialogue partners for the EU being Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), ASEAN regional forum (ARF) and South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC)*” (p. 3). Yet, EU-SAARC co-operation in support of regional economic integration in South Asia turned out to be difficult due to its low priority on the political agenda of the sub-region’s governments, and hence the main achievements on the regional economic integration agenda under the RSP are confined to ASEAN.

Regional-level EU support contributed to agreement on, and partly implementation of, new protocols, framework agreements or harmonised regulations in ASEAN, but not elsewhere in Asia. Neither the *ASEM Dialogue Facility* nor EU-SAARC co-operation has had a comparable focus. Both the TRA Evaluation (2013) and the Evaluation of EU-ASEAN co-operation (2009) stress the significant role of the EU in facilitating the negotiation and implementation of a wide range of relevant regional agreements in Southeast Asia. All interventions took place under the umbrella of *APRIS II*, which contributed to the preparation of common regulatory regimes, such as in cosmetics and electrical and EEE, as well as to the preparation and adoption of common trade documents (e.g. ASEAN Harmonised Tariff Nomenclature (AHTN) and ASEAN Customs Declaration Document (ACDD)). A large number of legal and regulatory adjustments resulted from the EU’s interventions, and these have been pivotal in developing an improved and modernised operational environment for trade at national or regional level. However, not all agreements have been implemented according to schedule, as the evaluation’s field phase revealed. ARISE has further strengthened the focus on standards and conformity agreements in ASEAN, with a particular emphasis on foodstuffs and electronic and pharmaceutical products (*Indicator 212*).

EU regional-level support was instrumental in increasing the reliability and accuracy of statistical data in ASEAN. To many stakeholders interviewed as part of this evaluation, statistics is the biggest and most visible success story of EU-ASEAN co-operation in recent years. The system is based on two institutional pillars: the ASEAN Integration Monitoring Office (AIMO), and its subordinated statistical

unit (ASEANStats). Both AIMO and ASEANStats have received substantial financial assistance from international donors, including the EU, AusAID, the German agency GIZ, the World Bank, and the IMF. The EU alone committed nearly EUR 5 million for the development of ASEANStats, through the *EU-ASEAN Statistical Capacity Building (EASCAB) Programme* (2009-2013). The assessment of *EASCAB* is generally positive, and the programme is seen as having made substantial contributions. Despite being a very small and understaffed unit, ASEANStats has been able to generate important and useful regional statistics, including core trade data, such as eight-digit merchandise trade data. Country statistics have been available since early 2012. In the same year, ASEC published the ASEAN International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) Yearbook. It presents time series data and trends on ASEAN international merchandise trade, covering the period from 1993 to 2011, at HS eight-digit level (Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System). The assistance of *EASCAB* is prominently acknowledged in the Yearbook. Data on trade in goods and services and regional FDI is now also aligned with the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) to facilitate easier monitoring of AEC implementation. (*Indicator 213*)

Approaches to IPR have been strengthened and implemented to some extent at regional and national levels in ASEAN, but not elsewhere in Asia. As in the case of other issues dealt with under this JC, EU regional-level support has been restricted to ASEAN, with *ECAP* being at the core of regional approaches to IPR. As the result of *ECAP*, appropriate legislation is in place in most AMS, although enforcement remains a challenge. The *ECAP III* objectives address the weak points as identified by the *ECAP II* Evaluation, but project implementation was affected by major problems both on the EU and ASEAN sides in 2011-12. *ECAP III*, Phase II, was only re-started with a meeting of the ASEAN Working Group on Intellectual Property Co-operation (AWGIPC) in November 2012. The Inception Phase began in January 2013. (*Indicator 214*)

The Role of the EU as important source of expertise on regional economic integration is acknowledged by Asian partners mainly in ASEAN and, to a lesser extent, in SAARC. There is strong evidence from a range of sources, including previous country strategy evaluations, thematic evaluations (such as evaluation of TRA) and interviews, that the EU is perceived as an important source of expertise, knowledge, reference or even model for ASEAN. According to evaluation reports and confirmed by stakeholder interviews, all major interventions, including, but not limited to, *APRIS II*, *ARISE*, *ECAP II*, *READI* and *EASCAB*, have successfully established the EU as the most relevant and trusted source of expertise in the area of economic integration. ASEM has also played some part in increasing EU visibility and thereby the EU's credibility as a point of reference for processes of regional economic integration. Evidence beyond ASEAN is rare, though. Interviews with SAARC officials suggest that the EU experiences and achievements are seen as relevant but that other regional organisations, particularly ASEAN, are more important as a reference point because they are facing similar challenges as SAARC. (*Indicator 215*)

4.2.2 JC 22: Extent to which regional-level EU support to Asia has facilitated the regional flow of goods and services

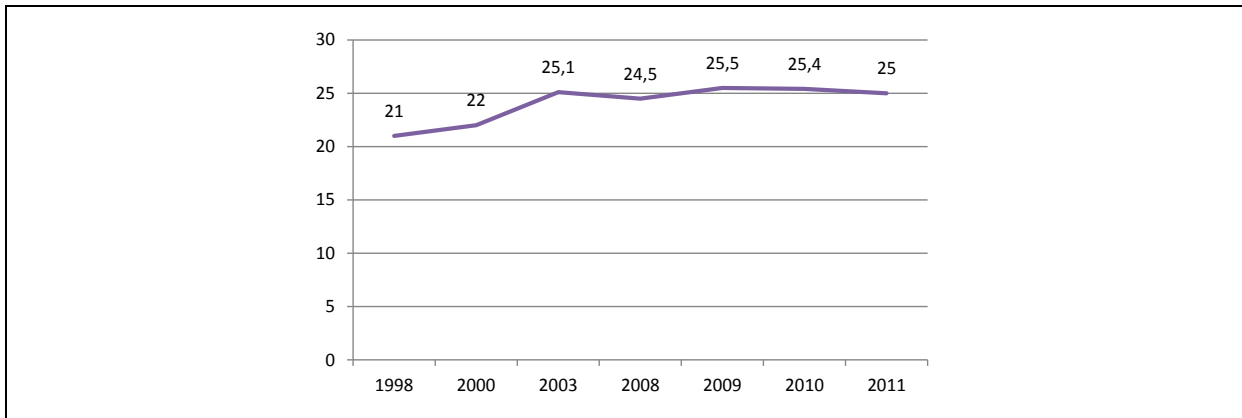
The EU has made an important contribution to the facilitation of relevant regional agreements in ASEAN (but not SAARC) through the strengthening of the institutional arrangements and mechanisms that cover the regional flow of goods and services.

Trade liberalisation in ASEAN was based on the Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT) scheme from 1992 to 2010. This was replaced by the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) in 2010. The EU's main contribution to the implementation of CEPT and ATIGA has been through *APRIS II* and, since 2012, *ARISE*. A main focal point had been the improvement of the ATIGA rules of origin (RoO). There can be no doubt about the relevance of this intervention as RoO are considered to be the most serious bottleneck affecting regional free trade in Southeast Asia. The MTR of the regional strategy (2010) acknowledged the effectiveness of EU-support in the process of implementing regional trade agreements, but also pointed to prevailing hurdles: "*ASEAN's performance in strengthening regional integration has been quite impressive, and has been successfully supported by technical assistance and dialogue under the current MIP. Still, it has become evident that one of the weakest points of ASEAN is the lack of implementation of regional agreements at national level – i.e. enforcement at ASEAN Member State level, as well as capacity constraints in the Secretariat.*" (p. 9).

If, as claimed by several evaluation reports (e.g. CLE Philippines, TRA and ASEAN Evaluation) and other assessments (e.g. EAMRs), *APRIS II* had had a significant effect not only on the establishment of the necessary institutional pillars but also on the implementation and utilisation of CEPT-ATIGA, it does not show in quantitative terms. Intra-ASEAN trade (as a percentage of the overall trade of the

AMS) has not increased markedly since 2003, and only by 4.4% since 1998. Furthermore, the utilisation of the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) remains low.

Figure 12 Intra-ASEAN Trade in % of total ASEAN trade 1998-2011



Source: Data compiled from ASEAN Secretariat 2012, ASEAN Community in Figures 2011, Jakarta, p. 15; ASEAN Statistics Leaflet, Selected Key Indicators 2012.

Not only has the relative volume of intra-ASEAN stagnated, but a comprehensive survey²⁷ of more than 400 businesses across all 10 ASEAN countries found that the utilisation of AFTA remains low. Only 29% of respondents indicated that their organisations used preferential provisions in ASEAN and/or ASEAN-plus economic agreements (ASEAN agreements with other economies, such as the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area – ACTFA). This was an improvement on the 22% in the 2010 Survey, but still a low figure given that ASEAN claims there has been virtually full implementation of AFTA (AFTA Council 2010, p. 3). However, particularly striking is the fact that 46% of the businesses surveyed stated that they were not planning to use preferential provisions in the future (p. 11).

EU interventions have not fully anticipated and addressed the political hurdles in the process of regional economic integration. This evaluation found only limited appreciation of the political framework conditions that determine the success or failure of regional integration (TRA Evaluation 2013, p. 45; stakeholders interviews). As already outlined under EQ1, there has been no direct EU regional-level support to regional trade integration in SAARC due to reasons beyond the EU's control – that is. the SAARC Secretariat's lack of a mandate to co-operate with the EU, and the related failure to secure a financing agreement. (*Indicator 221*)

Progress towards harmonised customs clearance procedures has been achieved in ASEAN, which is the sole focus on customs under the Asia Strategy. No such efforts have been made in relation to SAARC, or under the ASEM umbrella. Since 2005, up to 2,000 technical assistance and capacity-building projects in about 50 different sectors have been implemented to achieve the customs-related goals set out in the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint and related agreements. Virtually all of these interventions have been funded through multi-million donor programmes, including very prominently *APRIS II* and, more recently, *ARISE*. Evaluation reports and stakeholder interviews confirm a significant contribution of *APRIS II* towards the implementation of central matters of customs harmonisation and integration. These include the ASEAN Customs Declaration Document (ACDD) and Certificates of Origin as steps on the way to a fully computerised ASEAN Customs Transit System (ACTS) under the ASEAN Framework Agreement on the Facilitation of Goods in Transit. However, no significant further progress on ACDD or ACTS has been achieved since *APRIS II* ended in 2010, suggesting a low level of ASEAN ownership. Furthermore, both the *APRIS II* final evaluation and TRA Evaluation identify a lack of political commitment and, partly, technical capacity among the AMS as the main hurdle in the regional process of customs harmonisation. However, *ARISE* has provided new momentum, and core areas of the customs reform have been continued or restarted. Overall, detailed data –

²⁷ The 2011-12 ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) Survey on ASEAN Competitiveness – the second of its kind; the first was published in 2010 – collated responses from businesses across all 10 ASEAN countries, comprising a mix of small, medium and large companies. The survey is based on 405 “usable responses”. A majority of the surveyed businesses had been in operation for more than 10 years, had trade/investment linkages within ASEAN, and had at least general knowledge of ASEAN policy initiatives.

based on the World Bank Logistics Performance Index (LPI) and the World Economic Forum's Enabling Trade Index – shows that gradual improvements in key customs sectors (e.g. efficiency of customs administration; efficiency of import-export procedures; transparency of border administration) are evident for most AMS. Given *APRIS II*'s centrality in support of ASEAN's endeavours in this sector, it is reasonable to attribute these positive changes in part to the EU. (*Indicator 222*)

Table 8 Efficiency of import-export procedures, detailed indicators

Year	Efficiency of clearance process 1-5 (best)		No. of days to import		No. of documents to import		Cost to import, US\$ per container		No. of days to export		No. of documents to export		Cost to export, US\$ per container	
	2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012
Country														
Cambodia	2.2	2.3	30	26	11	10	872	872	22	22	11	9	732	732
Indonesia	2.7	2.5	27	27	6	7	660	660	21	17	5	4	704	644
Malaysia	3.4	3.3	14	14	7	7	450	435	18	17	7	6	450	450
Philippines	2.6	2.6	16	14	8	8	819	730	16	15	8	7	816	630
Singapore	3.9	4.1	3	4	4	4	439	439	5	5	4	4	456	456
Thailand	3.0	3.0	13	13	3	5	795	750	14	14	4	5	625	625
Vietnam	2.9	2.7	23	21	8	8	901	670	24	22	6	6	734	580

Legend:

	Significant improvements
	Slight improvements
	Slight worsening
	Worsening

*Data for Brunei, Laos and Myanmar not available. Source: Data compiled from World Economic Forum: The Global Enabling Trade Report 2009 and 2012 (colour codes added by the authors of this report).

EU regional-level support has been instrumental in achieving progress towards agreements on shared standards and sanitary and phytosanitary standards (SPS) in ASEAN, but not elsewhere in Asia. According to the TRA Evaluation (2013), “the EU has spearheaded the process of establishing and implementing regional SPS and TBT regimes, particularly in ASEAN” (Vol. 2, p. 38). For example, the implementation of the 2009 ATIGA, which was developed with strong EU support (especially *APRIS II*), included new obligations in both the TBT and SPS areas. The EU-support was also crucial in the cases of the ASEAN Cosmetics Directive (ACD), ASEAN Harmonised Electrical and Electronics Equipment Regulatory Regime (EEERR), and ASEAN's UN Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS). Effectiveness of EU support is also reported in the case of member states, according to several CLEs (e.g. The Philippines CLE). (*Indicator 223*)

With regard to transport issues, the EU has recently started to support the regionalisation of civil aviation, with a main focus on the establishment and implementation of regional safety standards, particularly in SAARC. The *EU-South Asia Civil Aviation Co-operation Project* emerged as the main focus of EU support to SAARC under the Asia Strategy. The objective was to “contribute to regulatory harmonisation, policy reform and capacity building at the regional level to support a safe, secure and sustainable regional air transport environment and assist South Asia in gradually harmonising their national systems, thus promoting air transport growth” (Final Formulation Mission Report, 2009pp. 17-18). However, after a successful start and a strong buy-in on the part of the SAARC member states, the project had to be terminated in mid-2012 due to major problems during implementation. (*Indicator 221*) A separate bilateral *EU-India civil aviation project* has successfully implemented so far. The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) blueprint includes an ASEAN Open Skies agreement, which is to be fully implemented in 2015. In support of Open Skies, the EU funds the *ASEAN Air Transport Integration Project (AATIP)*. Since the Financing Agreement was only signed in October 2012, it is too early for any assessment. (*Indicator 224*)

Overall, the EU has strongly, visibly and – in most cases – effectively supported the facilitation of the regional flow of goods and services. However, with the exception of the aviation sector, the EU has focused its activities on ASEAN, and not SAARC. Furthermore, the contribution of the ASEM Dialogue Facility and ASEF has been very small.

4.3 EQ3 on added value to regional integration in non-economic fields

EQ3: To what extent has EU support to human security challenges strengthened regional problem-solving capacities?

The main rationale of this EQ derives from the growing importance of regional integration in non-economic areas. The regional organisations themselves and the EU acknowledge that some of the most pressing challenges, which can benefit from cross-border co-operation, are related to social human security issues. The general trend over the last three decades of EU-Asia relations has been the steady broadening of areas of engagement. This has been particularly visible in relations with South-east Asia. EC COM (2003) 399/4 "A new partnership with Southeast Asia" noted that a more active engagement was needed, and it identified a wide range of potential areas of co-operation. The range reflects the fact that, with the growing importance of AMS on the world stage, and with closer EU-ASEAN relations, the EU's concerns expanded from purely economic issues, especially regional integration, to other, sometimes sensitive areas, such as the social sectors (mostly education and health), the environment, and human rights. This overall trend towards engagement on a broader range of issues has also been visible in EU relations with SAARC.

The RSP stated that support to regional integration in SAARC would include non-economic co-operation fields, including energy and environment, disaster risk reduction (including preparedness and prevention), communicable disease control (including HPEDs such as SARS and pandemic influenza); and transport (including civil aviation). Environment would be addressed as a cross-cutting issue (p. 8).

In the case of ASEAN, the envisioned scope of support covered, inter alia, regional capacity building and support to region-to-region dialogues in the areas of environment, security and justice, and energy. This EQ covers the EU-support to the regional management of human security challenges in Asia in the areas of communicable disease control, border management and disaster risk reduction. The EQ seeks to assess the extent to which the EU has strengthened co-ordinated regional approaches to the management of these human security issues. While the EQ considers national and regional levels of intervention, its main emphasis is on the EU support to the strengthening of cross-border co-operation in Asia, and particularly looks at ASEAN and SAARC.

EQ3 – Overall assessment

The evaluation team approached this EQ in two ways: regional approaches to cross-border aspects of HPEDs; and disaster risk reduction and border control management.

The responses are quite different. In the area of emergent infectious diseases, the EU has been a catalyst and a leader through its participation in the Avian and Human Influenza Facility (a World Bank-managed multi-donor trust fund), and its capacity strengthening at ASEAN and SAARC Secretariats in the areas of animal and human health (mostly implemented by WHO and FAO), and in countries in the area of animal health – mostly implemented by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). Mid-term reviews and assessments identified significant progress at national level. In fact, one assessment spoke of the EU's support as having financed an unprecedented level of co-operation between animal and human health agencies. Pandemic Preparedness Plans, involving co-operation between the Ministries of Health and Agriculture were produced. Unfortunately, assessment universally concludes that countries are unable to cope with even moderate-scaled outbreaks of emergent infectious diseases, and that national authorities remain resistant to cross-border approaches. Nevertheless, national capacities to respond to emergent infectious diseases have been strengthened in all three focal areas – human health, animal health, and, most important, integrated human-animal health. Institutional co-ordination has been strengthened, while international standards and good practice have been disseminated. However, where all the MTRs and evaluations scrutinised during the desk phase are in agreement is that the institutional capacity created has not been matched by adequate resources to invest in the physical and human resources that would be required in the case of a meaningful disease outbreak. Moreover, the infectious disease surveillance and control system is only as strong as its weakest link, in two senses: first, in the chain running from disease detection at the local level through national and international responses; in the geographical component. For example, it emerged during the field mission that there has been no real success in integrating human and animal health in Myanmar, the country with the second largest land mass in the region. During the field phase, experts expressed no confidence that a significant, fast-moving disease outbreak could be contained effectively. The weakest link in the response mechanism was found to be epidemiology – that is, inadequate surveillance and control mechanisms. Poverty, remoteness, poor farm practices,

EQ3 – Overall assessment

inadequate market sanitation, and local governance issues make this a challenging area to address.

ASEAN and, to a much lesser extent, SAARC have taken a number of steps to promote regional approaches, including the formation of networks of laboratories, diagnostic centres, epidemiological surveillance units. However, it appears that the capacity of ASEAN, as well as SAARC, to develop effective regional approaches to infectious disease remains weak. Nevertheless, the ASEAN and SAARC secretariats are now continuing to co-ordinate regional facilities after the conclusion of the HPED programme, which bodes well for sustainability. Moreover, the accomplishments of EU support should be seen in light of the extremely poor initial conditions, and the fact that this is a relatively new area of EU support.

EU support for research can be positively assessed. At the regional and country level, resources and information sharing have been promoted, and national institutions have been integrated into international scientific networks. The EU's Framework Research Programmes – essentially, benefiting European research institutions – have been a major source of scientific advances. EU support has helped researchers to develop improved vaccination approaches, diagnostic and testing methods, human case management approaches, and approaches for behavioural change to address the root causes of infectious disease emergence and transmission in Asia. A concrete example of how improved science is reducing vulnerability to emergent diseases is SARS, which was identified and sequenced within about six weeks, thanks to an intense co-ordinated international scientific effort. That would have been impossible 30 years ago.

Evidence was gathered during field mission interviews that the EU, by financing research and engaging in health actions under *AUP*, has made a significant impact on the fight against drug-resistant tuberculosis and malaria. These are slow-moving crises, as opposed to fast-moving HPED outbreaks. It is possible that EU investment – in such areas as capacity building, networking and regional approaches – on these drug resistance problems will be as important in the long-run as its better-publicised support for measures against HPEDs.

Tackling disaster risk reduction and border management at a regional level seems to be an obvious priority. With regard to the first aspect, the Asian region remains one of the most vulnerable regions of the world, having experienced the largest share of global disaster occurrences over the last decade. EU-funded interventions focus on information transfer and knowledge management for ASEAN to improve delivery of disaster management services. In this field, good progress has been achieved, not least due to the high level of ASEAN ownership and to the ASEAN Secretariat's pro-active approach of engaging the EU (and other donors) on matters of disaster preparedness.

With respect to border management, it was found that regional-level EU support, via the regional window, increasingly focused on border-related issues in ASEAN, while it appears that SAARC was not targeted at all. The support provided contributed to the harmonisation of customs procedures and modernising procedures at major hubs in the pursuit of enhanced regional economic integration, the fight against transnational crime, and the fight against illegal migration and all forms of trafficking.

To summarise, the EU has contributed to regional co-ordination in both health and disaster management. In health, initial conditions were poor, but the EU's support – mostly in the fields of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and HPEDs/Highly Pathogenic Emergent Disease – contributed to forming a regional network of laboratories and centres for epidemiological surveillance and monitoring. The task of protecting against emergent viruses in the region is daunting because some parts of the system designed to respond to disease outbreaks are inherently weak. However, there has been some progress, and the ASEAN and SAARC secretariats are committed to continuing their co-ordinating role. Through health interventions via the *AUP* programme, the EU has supported the fight against drug resistance, while its support for medical and health system research globally has made a significant contribution to global public health.

4.3.1 JC 31: Extent to which regional-level EU support to Asia has contributed to developing a regional response mechanism towards highly pathogenic and emerging diseases (HPEDs) and other health-related challenges

Infectious disease is a classic global and regional public good. This means that individual countries have an incentive to take a free ride on the back of the responses of other countries, leading to a sub-optimal response. Multi-national or supra-national action is required to address the problem, and it is therefore not surprising that the EU, appropriately, has been at the forefront of the response to highly pathogenic emergent and re-emergent diseases. Asia, and particularly Southeast Asia, has long been

recognised as the source of a disproportionate number of novel viruses, recently including SARS and HPAI. The prevalence of domestic poultry and pigs, the tradition of wet markets, porous international borders and a thriving cross-border trade in animals, weak surveillance and control mechanisms, and the governance failures that lead to disease outbreaks being suppressed rather than immediately reported, all contribute to the problem. The latter centre around the failure to adequately compensate farmers whose flocks must be destroyed to control disease outbreaks, leading them (and officials in their districts) to suppress information. Much the same problem has been encountered in China, although the response to SARS addressed the problem.

The EU was a major force in the response to HPAI, broadening its response over the years to cover the range of HPEDs. The goals of the support were to increase the capacities of countries and regions to plan and develop sustainable approaches to surveillance. Its support has covered both national interventions (for example, under the World Bank-administered Avian and Human Influenza facility, which concentrated on helping countries to develop Pandemic Preparedness Plans) and regional-level interventions in the context of the 2007-13 Asia Regional Strategy.

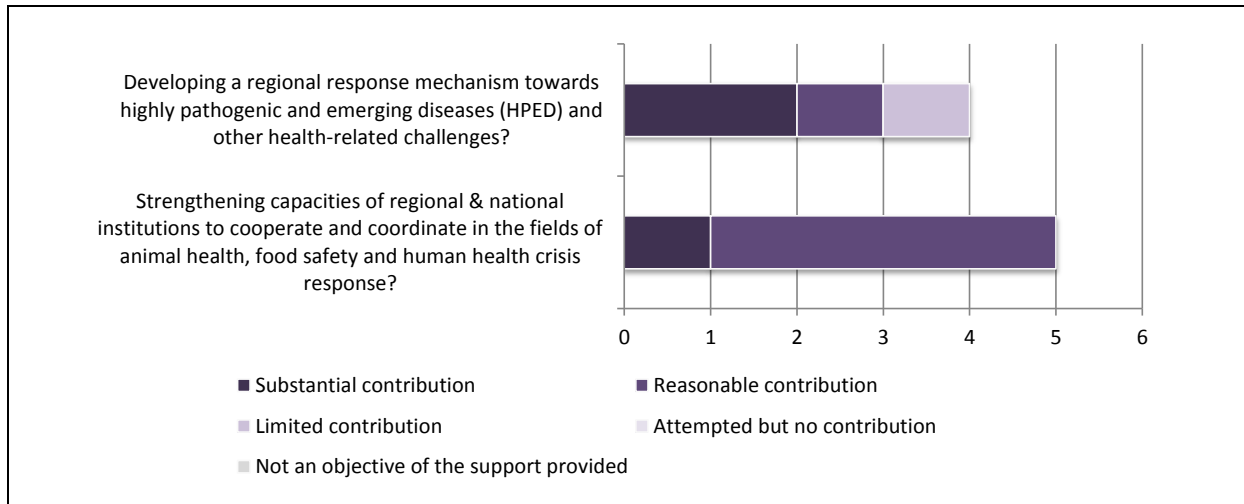
Participation in the Avian Influenza Trust Fund and initiatives under the RSP have both, to some extent, been evaluated. Indicator 311 asks whether the EU has effectively contributed to the development of regional structures to prevent and control HPED via improved cross-border co-operation and sharing of information. The MTR of the AHIF found signs of success at national level, while admitting that the health systems (both veterinary and human) in many of the Asian countries were far too weak to be able to cope even with a moderate disease outbreak, and no country was in a position to “ring-fence” a truly serious, fast-moving outbreak. The review found that the projects under the facility had done little to promote cross-border co-operation, which remained largely in the hands of the relevant international institutions, and had attracted little national co-operation or support. The field mission suggested that animal and human health continue to be compartmentalised at national level. Medical experts expressed the view that work (some of it financed by the EU either through research funds or in the context of AUP health actions) to stem the rise of drug-resistant tuberculosis and malaria were likely to have higher payoff. The latter might present an especially attractive opportunity, because in the region of concern, the Thai-Myanmar border area, the prevalence of malaria is quite low, but the rate of artemesian resistance is quite high. This provides an opportunity to choke off the problem at its source. If not, there is a danger that the problem will spread across Myanmar, into Bangladesh and India. (*Indicator 311*)

The 2007 HPED initiative *Regional co-operation programme on highly pathogenic and emerging and re-emerging diseases in Asia* implemented by WHO, FAO and OIE, was an appropriate response to the weakness of regional and sub-regional co-operation. Its goals were to support the ASEAN and SAARC Secretariats to establish Regional Support Units and Regional Epidemiology / Laboratory / Diagnostic Centres with FAO and OIE support, and to enable OIE to carry out country-level activities. The last evaluative document available is a December 2008 Expertise, which warned of the danger that, without better co-ordination and communication between the implementing agencies, the project risked splitting into separate, agency-specific endeavours.

A more recent synthetic study, the December 2010 *Outcome and Impact Assessment of the Global Response to Avian Influenza*, gives a balanced view. It confirms that progress at national level has been greater than at regional level, blaming low capacity at ASEAN and SAARC and the lack of interest at national level in regional and cross-border co-operation. Current information is, however, that the ASEAN and SAARC secretariats are sustaining the co-ordination of regional facilities after the conclusion of the HPED programme, which shows good commitment and bodes well for sustainability. Moreover, the results obtained as a result of EU support need to be viewed in light of the fact that initial conditions were not favourable and that the number of years that have so far elapsed is relatively short.

In summary, there has been some success in building national resilience, but very limited success in strengthening regional co-operation and co-ordination. This appears to be borne out by the EUD survey, in which most EUDs felt that the EU had made at least a reasonable contribution to national and regional capacities, but rather fewer saw this as leading to a credible regional response mechanism. Nepal and Indonesia saw a substantial EC contribution to regional response, but this may simply be because the EUDs have more familiarity with regional programmes at the ASEAN and SAARC secretariats. (*Indicators 312 and 313*)

Figure 13 EUD survey results: Contribution of regional-level EU support to emerging diseases



Source: EUD survey

At the national level, the process and output of Pandemic Preparedness Plan preparation, even though such plans, may be judged inadequate, represented progress. The December 2012 *Outcome and Impact Assessment* of the Global Response to Avian Influenza found that the programme contributed to achieving “unprecedented collaboration between the animal health and the public health sectors”. However, the cross-border and regional dimension needs more work. At the national level, epidemiological surveillance and control, especially at the grassroots level, was held to be the weakest part of the infectious disease surveillance and control system. There was a particular need to strengthen epidemiological education. (*Indicator 314*)

Finally, the EU has been a leader in sponsoring research on Avian Influenza and other highly pathogenic emergent infections. Some of this research has been at country level and has resulted in improved diagnostic tests. Improved epidemiological modelling to strengthen surveillance, and new approaches to Information, Education, and Communication based on behavioural research, were developed as a result of EU support. Other research has been funded under Framework Programmes and has contributed to vaccine development, improved diagnosis and early warning systems, ecology and pathogenesis of HPAI infections, studies of migratory birds, HPAI (H5N1) virus survival, reinforcement of the laboratories network for avian and human influenza, virus virulence, pathogenicity, replicability and transmissibility, drugs resistance and new drugs against Ribonucleic Acid (RNA) viruses, and transfer of technology and training. (*Indicator 315*)

4.3.2 JC 32: Degree to which regional-level EU support to Asia has contributed to border management and disaster risk reduction through regional co-operation approaches and mechanisms

This JC was addressed by focusing on three indicators: regional mechanisms for disaster risk reduction and prevention within ASEAN and SAARC; disaster responses; and the extent to which regional-level EU support contributed to improved border control efficiency. In terms of natural and man-made disasters, Asia remains one of the most vulnerable parts of the world, experiencing the largest share of the global disaster occurrences over the last decade, thus demanding an institutionalisation of mechanisms for disaster risk reduction at regional level.

The adoption of a regional approach to disaster management and the lack of a regional approach to problems of uprooting stand in contrast. For ASEAN, efforts to strengthen regional mechanism date back several decades. For instance, the ASEAN Expert Group on Disaster Management (AEGDM) was established in 1972, and was further developed into the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM). Several agreements (such as ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Responses – AADMER) in this area further highlight the substantial progress of ASEAN in this context. Despite the progress for co-ordination at the ASEAN regional level, evaluations of national disaster response mechanisms have found them to be poor. Numerous EU-funded interventions targeting disaster risk reduction (natural and man-made) have been implemented via national programmes, thematic instruments or via ECHO. However, the regional-level EU support provided to ASEAN via the regional strategy appears to be relatively modest, and seems to have been mainly

concentrated on knowledge-sharing via the *Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (READI)*. While *READI* has contributed to increased information transfer and knowledge management, an effective delivery of disaster management services is still in its early days.

SAARC, through its Disaster Management Centre (SAARC DMC) in Delhi, was reported to have a more advanced approach to disasters, but no evidence of EU contribution at regional level was found. This reflects the assessment made in the MTR of the RSP, highlighting the low level of integration and calling for a scaling down of the support. (*Indicator 321 and 322*)

Tackling border management at a regional level seems to be obvious when looking at the nature of international borders. While it was found that regional-level EU support via the RSP increasingly focused on border-related issues (at least in ASEAN), the results appear to be relatively modest and are mainly confined to the capacity strengthening of authorities. As the most tangible outcome of the first *EU-ASEAN Migration and Border Management Programme (2009-2011)*, a pilot Border Management System was implemented successfully by Interpol in Cambodia and Vietnam.

For ASEAN, improving the efficiency of border controls already played a relatively important role under the previous strategy. In particular, within the context of *APRIS II*, the EU actively supported ASEAN in the area of customs procedures, paving the way for more efficient customs control systems at ASEAN borders. Under the 2007-2013 strategy, another project, the *EU-ASEAN Migration and Border Management Programme (EAMPMB)*, dealing exclusively with border management and migration issues, has been launched, emphasising the increasing importance of the subject. The project is aimed at modernising and ensuring best international practice at major border crossings in order to promote the legal flow of goods and people and to fight transnational crime, illegal migration, and trafficking in all forms. While the programme was found to be very relevant both for ASEAN and the EU, and is seen as “a flagship of EU-ASEAN Co-operation by the ASEAN Secretariat”, several constraints at the level of project design and implementation have been identified (e.g. lack of strategic focus, confusion between stakeholders regarding project implementation) and severely hampered its potential. While EU support to border management features quite prominently in some countries, implemented via the national window (e.g. Border Management for Northern Afghanistan – BOMNAF), no border management intervention was implemented at regional level for SAARC. (*Indicator 323*)

4.4 EQ4 on environment, energy and climate change

EQ4: To what extent has the regional EU support to Asian key stakeholders contributed to enhancing the adaptation to and mitigation of climate change and the promotion of sustainable growth?

The regional EU support to Asia in the field of environment, climate change and energy consists of two programmes: (i) *SWITCH-Asia*, which specifically promotes sustainable consumption and production (SCP); (ii) Regional support programme to the Forestry Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (*FLEGT*) Action Plan (2003) – i.e. the *FLEGT-Asia Facility* (known in short as *FLEGT-Asia*).

SWITCH-Asia focuses on sustainable production and consumption (SCP), increasing the eco-efficiency, and reducing pollution (greenhouse gas emissions, waste disposal). The largest component consists of grant projects, with: about EUR 130 million committed for 64 grant projects from five Calls for Proposals (from 2007 to 2012); the last batch of projects will begin implementation by the end of 2013. The second component is the Network Facility (NF), which is run by the Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP) in Wuppertal, Germany, with a first phase commencing in 2009 (EUR 3.5 million), and a second phase from 1 September 2013. The NF seeks to disseminate results of grant projects and create synergy among grant projects to strengthen the policy dialogue on SCP. The Policy Support Component (PSC), which is the third component of *SWITCH-Asia* (EUR 15 million), started in 2011/12 and consists of a regional PSC programme implemented by the United Nations Education Programme (UNEP), and national PSC programmes implemented in four Asian countries (Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and The Philippines) and directly managed by the respective EUDs. Under the Regional Strategy Paper, there are no specific support programmes for energy, and energy efficiency during the whole product's life-cycle is a key and priority aspect of SCP practices.

FLEGT focuses on combating illegal logging by promoting legal trade in timber products, and thereby contributing to the sustainable use of natural resources. *FLEGT-Asia* (EUR 11.5 million, with an EU contribution of EUR 11 million) is implemented by the European Forestry Institute (EFI). The EU also supports the multi-donor funded Global *FLEGT* Facility, which is also run by EFI. *FLEGT-Asia* is now in its second Phase (Phase I ended 30 June 2013). In its first phase of implementation, the regional

support programme aimed to create awareness, exchange information on the EU *FLEGT* Action Plan and EU Timber Regulation (EUTR) at the sub-regional level, and to build capacity of key stakeholders to facilitate the development and negotiation of Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) with Asian countries. VPAs are bilateral agreements of the EU with Asian governments, while the EUTR establishes the regulations between private sector operators.

In the MIP 2011-2013, an additional intervention included in the Regional Strategy is the Asia Investment Facility for Climate Change (*AIF*, EUR 30 million). The *AIF* was launched in December 2011, and the first financing agreements were signed in early 2013. Therefore, this programme will be assessed from the relevance point of view and for its complementarity with other programmes supporting the environment.

The EQ seeks to address different aspects of SCP: first, by looking at the level to which EU support has helped in improving the policy framework for the uptake of SCP practices and systems; and second, by focusing on the degree to which the EU support contributed to the adoption of wide-scale application of SCP practices. Moreover, the EQ looks at the degree to which EU support has facilitated a reduction in illegal logging and an increase in potential trade of legal timber products. It also asks It also asks to what degree the support has been designed and used implementation modalities to facilitate the generation of the desired impact and synergy in the areas of climate change adaption and mitigation of green growth.

EQ4 – Overall assessment

The *SWITCH-Asia*, *FLEGT-Asia* and the *AIF* programmes each have a specific focus directly contributing to sustainable development: *SWITCH-Asia* focuses on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP); *FLEGT-Asia* on illegal logging and legal trade, and Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs); and the *AIF* provides co-funding for climate change adaptation and mitigation projects. Thus, they are fully complementary to each other. SCP is a strong concept in relation to achieving higher resource efficiency and greening the economy. The persistence of illegal logging directly affects tropical forests' role in mitigating climate change. Co-funding is an essential part of the regional package. At the time of the drafting of this report, it was too early to assess the results of the *AIF*.

To go more into detail, the *SWITCH-Asia* grant project component has been the most successful part of the programme. It has high prospects of enhancing the uptake of SCP best practices: two-thirds of the grant projects are expected to achieve their target in terms of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) applying SCP practices. The programme results in environmental gains, but it is difficult to quantify them due to the lack of baseline data and monitoring. Although initial expectations were that *SWITCH-Asia* would focus on the industrial and urban sector, a large proportion of projects are actually based on natural resources (e.g. agriculture, forestry), and service sectors are also included (e.g. tourism, transport, export facilitation). The very wide focus of the programme has led to many different interventions that limit opportunities for creating synergies, as well as jointly implementing actions at the policy level. Very few grant projects deal with sustainable consumption.

The contribution of *SWITCH-Asia* in relation to an improved national policy framework for SCP and the application of an appropriate mix of SCP-related policies has been relatively modest. Whereas the grant projects have demonstrated how to effectively implement policy instruments, they have mostly impacted at the local level (e.g. district, province, state). Grant projects themselves were unable to feed their results into national policy-making processes. Links of grant projects with the PSC for the scaling-up of their SCP practices and feeding their results into SCP policy-making processes is yet to be established and to be explored. The PSC, which started two years ago, has yet to show visible impacts. It may be difficult to achieve the high expectations.

The *national PSC* programmes are very small in terms of budget, human resources and duration, covering many themes and activities, including pilot projects. The co-ordination of many national government departments and agencies involved in SCP remains a challenge. In most Asian countries, proactive green development is driven by the respective sector ministries, and central governments may not recognise the added value of establishing one single co-ordination body for SCP, as envisaged by the PSC programmes.

The *regional PSC* programme implemented by UNEP has been able to reinforce its SCP networks through *SWITCH-Asia* funding and has organised a series of (sub-)regional workshops, seminars and training programmes on general SCP policies, strategies and instruments. However, there are no direct links with existing regional or national policy dialogues. UNEP's extensive SCP network is a strength of the regional PSC. At the same time, the regional PSC remained a somewhat independent component of *SWITCH-Asia*.

EQ4 – Overall assessment

The *Network Facility (NF)* has greatly improved the visibility of *SWITCH-Asia* and has promoted the application of the *SWITCH-Asia* approach in Asia and elsewhere in the world. The NF could have done more in terms of dissemination of project results and lessons learned. Co-ordination with the regional PSC is needed to also contribute to the policy dialogue on SCP.

With regard to *FLEGT-Asia*, the EU approach of providing technical and facilitating support to the EU *FLEGT* Action Plan, along with a tightening of the market, is effective. *FLEGT* is a key mechanism for combating illegal logging, by addressing key forestry governance issues. The focus of *FLEGT-Asia* on working both in producer countries that would apply for VPA) and consumer countries (such as China, India, Vietnam) is a well thought-out and balanced strategy. The merger of the *FLEGT-Asia* Facility with the global EU *FLEGT* Facility, both implemented by the European Forestry Institute (EFI), has increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the VPA processes, but care should be taken that the regional dimension is maintained.

The *Asian Investment Fund (AIF)* encourages green investments, and is complementary to *SWITCH-Asia* as it focuses on much larger projects, mainly relating to infrastructure. As it started only recently, it is too early to assess its effectiveness and impact. SMEs may indirectly benefit by improved and more affordable access to resources, such as energy, water, transport, communication and credit.

To summarise, the EU support to environment, especially through the *SWITCH-Asia* and *FLEGT-Asia* programmes, has made a substantive contribution to enhancing the adaptation to and mitigation of climate change and the promotion of sustainable or green growth. The programmes were highly complementary to each other, as well as to the thematic environmental programme and instruments. There is still scope for improvements in the *SWITCH-Asia* programme, such as more co-ordination among the grant projects and policy support programmes, concentrating on priority sectors and actions to generate more synergy and impact. The *FLEGT-Asia* Facility has shown that working both with timber producer and timber consumer countries is supportive for the overall implementation process of VPAs.

4.4.1 JC 41: Level to which EU support has helped improving the policy framework for the uptake of SCP practices and systems

The following box describes the composition of the *SWITCH* Policy Support Component (PSC)

Box 4 Composition of the Policy Support Component (PSC)

The original design of *SWITCH-Asia* did not include a PSC. The strengthening of the policy dialogue on SCP and the reinforcement and implementation of legal environmental and safety instruments were due to be taken care of by the grant projects, and by the *Network Facility (NF)*:

- The grant projects were required by the Guidelines for Applicants in the initial Call for Proposals to contribute to the development of an enabling policy environment.
- The NF was assigned the role of enhancing policy dialogue on SCP in Asia at national and regional levels; suggested activities were to prepare synergy papers on policy recommendations, co-organise national policy conferences, and support national and regional policy-makers and the EU staff in regional policy dialogue platforms (ASEAN, ASEM) and EU-Asia summits.

The MTR of *SWITCH-Asia* (2009) recommended the establishment of a PSC to increase Asian governments' awareness of SCP tools and their associated benefits to encourage SCP uptake in national policies. In the follow-up to this recommendation, both a regional and a national PSC were included. The PSC aims at supporting Asian governments in creating enabling policy frameworks for SCP and the development of SCP-related policies and regulations. The regional PSC was launched in 2011 and is implemented by UNEP (EUR 5.7 million). Four national PSC programmes were developed, commencing in October 2011 in Thailand, February 2012 in Indonesia and in Malaysia, and in July 2012 in The Philippines. The national PSC programmes are directly managed by the EUDs in the four Asian countries.

Source: *The ToR of the NF, Action Fiches of the PSC, MTR of SWITCH-Asia (2009)*

The field work confirmed that the *regional PSC* implemented by UNEP has reinforced its Asian networks through the *SWITCH-Asia* financing. UNEP has organised numerous regional and sub-regional consultation meetings, workshops and conferences to create awareness on SCP and enhance the policy dialogue. UNEP has also established a network of "focal points" or liaison persons in Asian countries. A weakness is that the focal points are from the Ministry of Environment, which is usually not a strong enough ministry to be in charge of overall co-ordination of SCP, as that requires the involvement of many sector ministries. (*Indicator 411*)

UNEP's regional workshops to build capacity on overall SCP policies, strategies and instruments are categorised as "*SCP policy dialogue*". However, there are no links to existing regional or national policy dialogues. It is left entirely to the participants (mainly UNEP's national focal points) how they will use the gained insights and information received during the workshops. UNEP is neither making a follow-up, nor monitoring impact. UNEP acknowledges the limited number of achievements and low impact generated by pointing out political changes at senior policy level (changing participants) and by the time needed for consultations (needs assessment). It stresses the fact that the PSC has run for only two of the four years of the operational period, and that more impact is expected in the later years (Final Evaluation *SWITCH-Asia*, June 2013). This Evaluation is of the opinion that for this to happen, the programme would have to work much more closely with other SWITCH-Asia components (*Indicator 412 and 413*)

The *national PSCs* primarily provide direct policy support to a selected number of SCP policy areas identified by their national counterparts (one or more Departments of the Ministry of Environment), such as green procurement, green labelling, SCP monitoring, SCP awareness. In developing these policy areas, they regularly organise workshops and meetings with stakeholders on the implementation of these specific projects. Small pilot projects to test policy recommendations are planned. The Malaysian PSC has set-up a multi-stakeholder consultation mechanism to formulate SCP-related policies for the 11th Five Year Plan, 2016-2020. The PSC is in the position to do this, as it is located within the Economic and Environment and Natural Resources Economics Section of the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) of the Prime Ministers' Office, and responsible for the formulation of the Five Year National Plans. (*Indicator 411*) Most capacity building of the national PSC programmes is being realised by joint working of contracted experts (national and international TA) and government officials, and by short seminars related to project activities, such as Green Public Procurement and development of SCP indicators and monitoring. (*Indicator 412*)

A basic assumption underlying the national PSC is that the recipient countries will create national SCP plans. The implementation of these national SCP plans requires one single co-ordinating body at supra ministerial level; however, in most Asian countries, sector ministries and agencies themselves continue to take responsibility for resource efficiency and greening of the economy. The national PSC programmes are useful in terms of the EU having a presence at national policy-making level related to SCP. However, given the small budget (EUR 2-3 million), the short duration and leverage of the main implementing partners, their contribution to creating a strengthened policy framework and to an improved mix of SCP-related policies and policy instruments has been very modest. The current design is over-ambitious. In addition, the PSCs have a mandate only in their respective countries, limiting exchange of experiences and multi-country collaboration (*Indicator 413*)

The *Network Facility* (NF) has been very active in numerous conferences and workshops to introduce the *SWITCH*-programme and has greatly increased its visibility. However, the NF did not play a direct role in enhancing the policy dialogue on SCP at the regional or national level. (*Indicator 411*) UNEP concluded, in its needs assessment for SCP that SCP policies are generally in place, but that support is needed for the formulation of tools that will reinforce the implementation of existing SCP-related policies, rather than promoting the formulation of new policies. This conclusion underpins the relevance of *SWITCH-Asia* grant projects, as they are actually developing and implementing SCP tools. (*Indicator 413*)

SWITCH-Asia Grant projects in the middle and higher income countries are already implementing existing SCP policies, demonstrating ways to implement them. Projects working on energy efficiency in various sectors and products and in relation to waste management are broadly supported by local governments, whereas communication to the central level is non-existent. Some SCP related policies may still be lacking only in the smaller and lower income countries. Therefore, SWITCH-Asia grant projects have a role to play in the development of enabling policy framework. Whereas most grant projects managed to engage local government, they were unable to reach out to the national level. Often, policy makers do not expect grant projects to provide them with useful results on which to build improvements in the enabling policy and regulatory framework. Consequently, the policy impact of grant projects at the national policy level was very limited.

A number of grant projects implemented at national level, with semi-government agencies as partners, had a large outreach and adoption nationwide, related to topics such as environmental standards. When grant projects pay specific attention to policy-related work, they usually organise study tours for policy-makers to Europe or other Asian countries, and invite policy-makers to key project events. A few projects managed to conduct dialogues and organise workshops and seminars with policy-makers. Furthermore, analysis of numerous project documents, confirmed by field visits, shows that

most grant projects have remained vague on what they intended to do. Frequently, they were claiming to contribute to policy-making and legislation, while these policies are actually already in place.

Grant projects have done little on capacity building related to policy making, except a few projects that had government agencies or departments as partners – particularly in China. Grant projects focused rather on technical and managerial capacity building related to SMEs and their organisations.

Some projects, especially those implemented by large international and regional organisations, appear to be less interested in involving national policy-makers as they pursue their own policies and trade-marks – for example, forestry certification scheme. There are also cases where national governments see the *SWITCH-Asia* project as competing with their own policies – for example, the ASEAN Energy Accreditation Scheme²⁸.

Usually, grant projects held quarterly co-ordination committee meetings, but the composition of these committees reflects the composition of the project partnerships. These are different from Steering Committees, where key stakeholders are involved. The lack of external accountability (to government and civil society) partly explains why projects may be failing to provide more strategic inputs, and also why involvement of policy-makers becomes more cumbersome (except for partnerships that include semi-governmental or local government agencies). (*Indicator 411*)

4.4.2 JC 42: Degree to which the EU support contributed to the adoption of wide-scale application of SCP practices

The *SWITCH-Asia* programme has made a significant effort in introducing the wide-scale application of SCP practices by companies, and results and outcomes are emerging as more grant projects are, completed, or soon will be.

The evaluation's analysis of all available ROM reports shows that all grant projects score well on relevance, and address the policies and needs of the EU and the recipient countries. However, in the Guidelines for Proposals there is no priority setting for the (sub-)sectors and/or topics/themes to be addressed. It is entirely open as to where and what the applicants choose to do within the overall objectives of the programme. This has resulted in a wide variation of projects, with few possibilities for creating synergy or jointly undertaking actions – for example, on influencing policy-makers. Projects with a low score in ROM often have design weaknesses. With a larger budget (up to EUR 2 million) and a longer implementation period (48 months) than previous regional programmes (e.g. Asia Pro Eco and Asia Invest), *SWITCH-Asia* grant projects achieve wider and more sustained results (Final Evaluation *SWITCH-Asia*, and confirmed by this evaluation). According to the analysis of ROM reports, the prospects for wide-scale application of SCP practices are assessed to be good: two-thirds of the projects are expected to achieve their targets. This includes a number of intermediate results (such as capacity building, voluntary agreements signed, efficiency performance plans achieved), ultimately leading to the uptake of SCP practices by the targeted SMEs and consumers. These prospects have also been confirmed by this evaluation, as well as by the Final Evaluation of *SWITCH-Asia* (June 2013).

This evaluation confirms that many projects do not monitor or measure the number of SMEs that apply improved SCP practices – or to what extent, as often they take only part of the overall recommended package). Consequently, it is difficult to show how many SMEs have actually implemented SCP practices. Therefore, most ROM reports rely on anecdotal evidence when it comes to application of SCP practices.

Box 5 ROM analysis of SWITCH grant projects

The outcomes of the Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM) exercise conducted between 2010 and 2012 form a good basis for answering JC 42. This evaluation analysed 34 ROM reports, covering 28 grant projects²⁹. The overall assessment of the ROM reports was very positive:

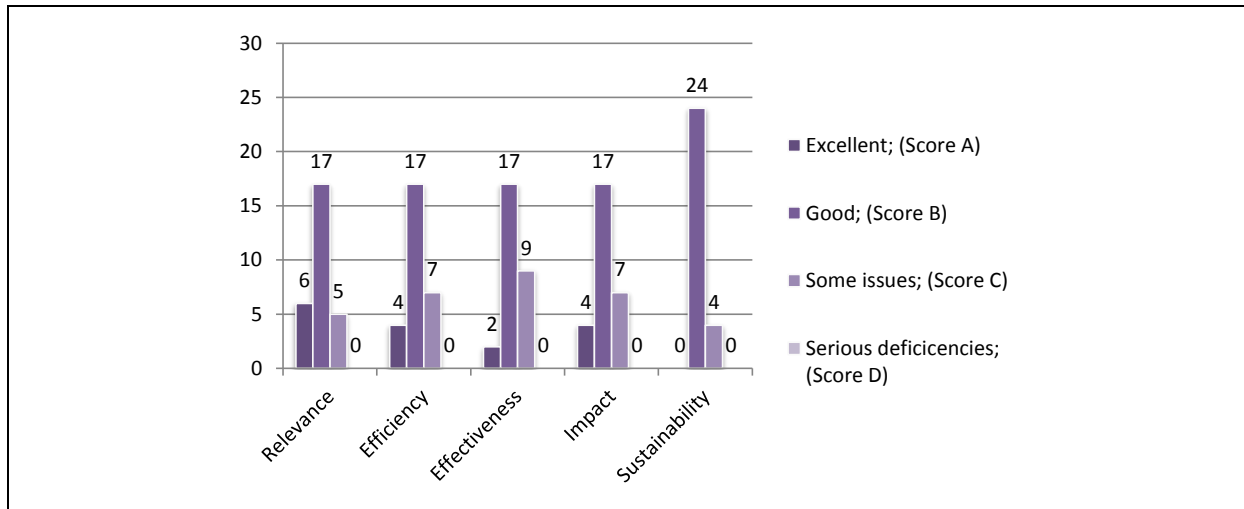
- 80% of the projects were performing well.
- 14 grant projects (50%) had a positive score on all five DAC criteria, meaning there were no serious issues to follow-up.
- 8 projects (30%) had issues to solve relating to areas covered by one DAC criterion.
- 3 projects (10%) had to solve issues related to two DAC criteria³⁰.

²⁸ Report on 5th Project Partners Meeting, 27 February, 2013; interview with Executive Director of the Energy Centre of ASEAN, conducted during field work.

²⁹ A total of 32 ROM reports, covering 28 projects in the following countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, The Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam.

The figure below presents the scoring of each of the DAC indicators.

Figure 14 Scoring made in ROM reports of 28 grant projects from 2010-2012 on each DAC criteria³¹



Source: Particip analysis

Several ROM reports may have over-rated the scoring on effectiveness and impact – that is, on the application of SCP practices. Most of the ROM missions took place in the early years of implementation and, therefore, mainly assess *potential* impact for ongoing projects. Usually, there is a huge potential. However, field missions' findings point to the fact that the *realised* impact is often (much) lower than targeted. (*Indicator 421*)

Barriers that restrict realised results and impact are access to credits/loans and pricing of resources. In many countries, energy and water is subsidised, making clean alternatives less attractive. Ultimately, market conditions (demand, competitiveness) determine the companies' choice of production technology. There may be adverse effects at the global level (pricing of key resources, such as fossil oil, raw materials) that affect local markets, and therefore project performance.

Another key issue is the regulatory framework. The reinforcement of stringent national standards and other regulations supports SCP. Without such reinforcement, SMEs that are active on the local market – with lower consumer awareness and less willingness to pay for eco-friendly or energy-efficient products – have fewer possibilities to remain competitive by employing a full range of SCP practices. Only companies that export to markets with high international customer standards will require their supplying SMEs to produce sustainably, and require the necessary investments through strict supply chain management. (*Indicator 423*)

The evaluation found that the more simple and straightforward projects were more effective and successful compared to broadly-defined, complex projects. For example, working in a sub-sector and with one product (e.g. electrical transformers), or having one key target, increased energy efficiency compared with multi-sectoral, CSR and multi-stakeholder projects. (*Indicator 421*)

Although SWITCH-Asia seeks to fund both sustainable production and sustainable consumption projects, the large majority of grant projects focus on resources-efficient and cleaner production – a few of which include consumer aspects). Only four out of 64 grant projects³² funded by SWITCH specifically address consumers' behaviour and public procurement.

SWITCH-Asia grants projects have not been able to apply an effective approach in reaching out to consumers. It becomes clear that grant projects may not be the right vehicle or instrument to implement sustainable consumption. This evaluation sees far more opportunities for the PSC. UNEP priori-

³⁰ Three projects were severely under-performing, but the second ROM reports showed substantive improvements, so no project remained in this category.

³¹ Six grant projects had two Monitoring Reports; the last MRs were included in this table. It was found that four projects showed a significant improvement in the second report, whereas two projects did not improve, or slightly had more issues to solve.

³² The table does not include the projects of the last (5th CfP) that will be contracted in 2013.

tised sustainable consumption, as much less progress has so far been achieved in this area, compared with sustainable production. All four *national PSC programmes* have a component on green procurement/sustainable consumption. Although their budgets are very limited, the support they provide may be able to mobilise large-scale government funding for setting out sustainable consumption strategies and awareness campaigns. However, it is too early to assess if this actually will be achieved. (*Indicator 422*)

Whereas the technical impact in terms of less pollution and more efficient use of resources may be estimated relatively easily by the projects, such measurement is lacking overall. Furthermore, no systems are in place to check to what extent the mind-sets and capacities of managers and technicians have been enhanced. Consequently, it is difficult to assess the extent to which grant projects have resulted in concrete environmental gains – such as decreased emissions, reduction in the use of materials, energy and solid and liquid waste. Only a limited number of projects implement baseline studies, which are essential to enable assessment of the conditions and needs of the target groups and the monitoring of results and impact. This is a clear omission in the requirements set out in the Guidelines for Applicants of SWITCH. (*Indicator 423*)

Grant projects have good prospects of sustainability. Nevertheless, not all sustainability issues are being resolved. Project implementing agencies play an important role in ensuring sustainability. The political will of government authorities to further promote SCP, mainly at local level, provides another sound basis for sustainability. The final determining factor in sustainability is the financial viability of SCP practices, and subsequent market acceptance of sustainably-produced goods and services. SCP best practices will continue, and SMEs will be willing to pay for the related services as long as they remain profitable. The more marginal and rural SMEs (e.g. cottage industries) have less possibilities than urban SMEs to continue SCP practices (lack of finance, lack of consumer willingness to pay more for environmental-friendly products). Another key factor is access to finance. Access to “*investment funds*” at a preferential rate and with limited “*red tape*” is a recurrent demand from SMEs that are not meeting minimal requirements of the banking establishment. (*Indicator 424*)

4.4.3 JC 43: Degree to which the EU regional support has facilitated a reduction in illegal logging and an increase in potential trade of legal timber products

The fieldwork confirmed that the *FLEGT-Asia* programme has contributed significantly to the *FLEGT* process in Asia, and in particular has substantially promoted and facilitated the first stages of the process leading to VPA – that is, dialogues and “*pre-negotiating consensus building*” in the various targeted countries. The wide variety of awareness-raising activities – based on a well-defined communication plan – has resulted in a good level of understanding of *FLEGT*, the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR) and the VPA process. Local capacities are clearly building up, through a large range of *FLEGT-Asia* supported meetings, events and courses.

The global *FLEGT Facility* was directly involved in the negotiating stages of the VPA process, supporting the EUDs. With the merging of the two facilities, the *FLEGT-Asia Facility* plays the same role in Indonesia and Malaysia as did the global EU *FLEGT Facility* previously (support to EU in VPA negotiations). This has been a priority since 2003 because of the urgent need to successfully conclude the VPA and issue *FLEGT*-licences. Increasingly, *FLEGT-Asia* responds to an EU-felt need for flexible support in the management of the VPA dialogues and negotiation processes.

The fieldwork also confirmed that the EUTR, which came into force on March 1, 2013 – implied a renewed interest of both timber producing and timber processing countries to understand and adapt themselves to the new market conditions. The EUTR was intended to be an additional incentive for countries, such as Indonesia, that decided to go for *FLEGT* licensing. So far, none of the Asian countries that signed or are in the process of signing the VPA have completed the process and obtained the *FLEGT* licence. Indonesia is expected to finalise the process before the end of 2013. *FLEGT-VPA* is a powerful instrument to fight illegal logging. In VPA, the key mechanism to address issues of governance safeguards and independent verifications is the Timber Legality Assurance System (TLAS). Although the legality as such does not cover all forestry governance issues, it certainly is one of the most important ones, with wide implications for the whole forestry production and processing sector.

The *FLEGT-Asia Facility* provided a regional dimension to the bilateral VPA processes by working not only in timber producing countries, but also in major Asian timber consumer and timber processing countries and with the ASEAN Secretariat. To increase effectiveness of TLAS and avoid timber leaving the country unregistered and through illegal channels, it is important that major importing countries – such as China, India and Korea – change their policies. Currently, they buy any amount of timber without asking any questions on its provenance. In India, for example, the *FLEGT-Asia Facility* ex-

plained the new EU Timber Regulation (EUTR) and jointly analysed with forestry stakeholders possible implications for India's exporting SMEs, as well as for India's timber import policy.

The presence in the region, with an office in Kuala Lumpur, was an important contributing factor to this approach. This regional dimension may be given less attention, now that the *FLEGT-Asia Facility* has been merged with the global EU FLEGT Facility.

FLEGT-Asia has played a key role in increasing awareness and enhancing policy dialogue on illegal trading. Combating illegal trade was identified as a good entry point for discussing forest government issues. By supporting the *FLEGT* process, the programme has contributed to forest governance issues, as *FLEGT* involves far-reaching forestry reforms and instruments, such as TLAS.

The original design of *FLEGT-Asia* included a specific objective to support regional customs collaboration. However, such co-operation requires a different institutional set-up, and capacity building of customs should be done when the TLAS has been defined. A study was done on regional timber trade flows. *FLEGT-Asia* collaborated with ASEAN and built up a network to put illegal logging and legality issues on the agenda. Three regional workshops were organised and encouraged six out of the 10 ASEAN countries to develop their own TLAS. However, timber is not yet a priority in trade harmonisation – that is, single window import-export systems. The idea is that ASEAN builds on the bilateral processes, but its capacity remains a challenge, particularly with regard to the frequent changes of staff. (*Indicator 432*)

4.4.4 JC 44: Degree to which the regional EU support has been designed and used implementation modalities to facilitate the generation of the desired impact and synergy in the areas of climate change adaptation and mitigation and green growth

The Network Facility (NF) has greatly improved the visibility of *SWITCH-Asia* and has promoted the application of the *SWITCH-Asia* approach in Asia and elsewhere in the world. The generation of synergies between projects has been limited due to the diverse and wide coverage of sectors and topics. There are a few good examples of mutual learning, such as green tourism projects in The Philippines and Sri Lanka and projects in various sectors that apply supply chain analysis.

The role of information-sharing among projects has so far mainly taken place during workshops and the annual networking events. A more permanent exchange among grant projects does not yet take place. Interaction and links between *grant projects* and the *policy support components (PSC)* have not yet been established.

The *NF* could have done more in dissemination of project results and lessons learned. By the end of 2012/beginning of 2013, a “critical mass” of (nearly) completed grant projects (from the 1st Call for Proposals) became available. However, during the 4th annual networking event, no specific sessions were organised to present achieved results and lessons learned that would form a good reference source and/or could be applied by projects that are in the first stages of implementation. It is expected that the *NF* will focus on dissemination of project results and lessons learned in its second phase.

While all stakeholders praise the achievements of the *NF*, its impact so far has been limited. Another set-up of the Annual Networking Event (smaller audiences – i.e. by sub-region – and focus on learning from mature and completed projects in similar sectors or addressing similar subject areas) would improve the impact of the *NF*. (*Indicator 441*)

There is considerable overlap between the objectives of the *PSC* and the *NF* in terms of enhancing the policy framework for SCP. Since the start of the *PSC*, *grant projects* and other stakeholders do not have a good understanding of what the *NF* and the *national and regional PSC* would do and how they would co-operate.

Limited collaboration took place between the *NF* and UNEP. A main reason appears to lie in the contractual basis for both components. Whereas the *NF* is being implemented under a Service Contract with EU-Brussels that requires detailed work plans and approval of budgets by EU Brussels, the *UNEP-PSC* is being implemented under a general agreement for UN organisations, which requires UNEP to conduct activities under the agreed objectives, while there are no obligations for planning or for forecasting of expenditure.

Whereas UNEP's extensive SCP network is certainly a strength of the *regional PSC*, and is supporting the promotion of SCP in Asia, the *regional PSC* remained a rather independent component of *SWITCH-Asia*. For the *regional and national PSC programmes* to be able to fulfil a complementary and facilitating role for the *grant projects*, it is important that they co-ordinate activities with each other, as well as with the *NF*. This requires links with the grant projects, but these have not yet been established. The *PSC programmes* have not been able to link the policy level with the private sector, de-

spite the fact that both *grant projects* and the *NF* could have provided adequate support in this respect. In absence of a connection between the *PSC programmes* and *grant projects*, little impact will be achieved at the national level. (*Indicator 442*)

The *FLEGT-Asia Facility* has maintained a good balance in working in both VPA and non-VPA countries, and the entry point of trade also proved to be useful to address non-VPA issues. Some countries are in an advanced stage of VPA development, while some have only just started negotiations. The VPA development process clearly structures the needs and activities of *FLEGT* support, whereas support needs are more diverse for non-VPA countries. The Facility provided tailor-made support in each of these stages. The focus of the programme to work both in producer countries (that would apply for VPA) and consumer countries (e.g. China, India and Vietnam) is well thought-out and a balanced strategy. (*Indicator 443*)

The *Asian Investment Facility (AIF)* certainly fulfils a need, but is a small player and only one of many funding sources. The Strategic Board ensures that projects are in line with EU strategies and policies. As such, there are no direct links with the other regional programmes, such as *SWITCH-Asia* or *FLEGT-Asia*. The *AIF* is complementary to *SWITCH-Asia*, focusing on other target groups. SMEs may benefit in an indirect way by improved and more affordable access to key resources, such as energy, water, transport, communication and credit. (*Indicator 444*)

Overall, the regional support is complementary and coherent with other thematic programmes on environment and climate change. A large number of agriculture and forestry-based *SWITCH-Asia* grant projects (26 grant projects, representing 40% of the total number of projects) are being implemented in all countries – that is, in the lower, middle and higher income Asian countries. Due to its specific focus on SCP, there is no duplication with other environmental programmes.

4.5 EQ5 on higher education

EQ5: To what extent has regional-level EU support to higher education institutions and networks in Asia and between Asia and Europe contributed to enhancing academic and research standards and to the internationalisation of universities in Asia?

Higher education (HE) has developed into a key driver of economic, political and social development for Asia. As early as 2001, the EU acknowledged the pivotal role of higher education in the “Asia Strategy Paper”. The strategic role of HE was then underlined in the Regional Strategy Paper /Regional Indicative Programme of 2005-2006 as one of three fundamental policy priorities. This is why the EU’s RSP 2007-2013 foresaw spending about 15% of its entire budget on HE activities.

In the past, EU support for the sector aimed to create ties between European and Asian universities at the level of teaching and research (directly), as well as HE governance (indirectly). In terms of teaching, the EU had used its highly successful *Erasmus Mundus* (EM) programme to enable the mobility of students, scholars and academics. In terms of research, the EU’s interventions primarily focused on including Asian partners in research networks funded by the EC’s Framework Programme.

The underlying rationale for this evaluation question is twofold. First, the question addresses the extent and degree to which strategic interventions and programmes of the EU have exported, translated and implemented the highly successful European models of regional integration of higher education and research. Despite ongoing criticism of the European project as a whole, as well as specific aspects of Europeanisation, the internationalisation and integration of European HE has been a resounding success. Mobility programmes for students and faculties – notably Erasmus – have made possible an unprecedented mobility of students, teachers and researchers across the continent. The Framework Programmes have generated robust and highly competitive research networks across universities, public and private sector research organisations. Arguably, EU programmes aimed at student and faculty mobility have – in addition to forging research networks – ignited an autonomous process of Europeanisation at all levels in organisations of HE and research, as well as HE governance across the continent.

Against this background, the evaluative question focuses on the extent to which strategic interventions and programmes – principally the *Erasmus Mundus* and TEIN programmes – have successfully exported this model to Asia, and on how this model has contributed to socio-economic and civic development in the region. This means looking at two types of inter-related impacts. First, the evaluative question examines the ways in which HE interventions and programmes have created new and strengthened existing networks of HE actors at all levels (student, faculty, governance). It also addresses the impacts – current impacts as well as, more importantly, trajectories and pathways of effects – of these programmes and interventions on the quality of teaching, research and governance of

HE in Asia. Second, the evaluation question explores the extent to which strategic interventions and programmes in HE have contributed – directly or indirectly – to wider developmental policy objectives. This EQ also investigates the extent to which the strategic interventions and programmes in the field of HE – usually thought of as having a rather indirect and long-term impact on issues such as poverty or basic health – have helped shape economic, social and civic development in Asia.

EQ5 – Overall assessment

The regional-level EU support to Higher Education (HE) in Asia has contributed to the widening and strengthening of HE networks between Asia and Europe, as well as, to a lesser degree, within Asia. Despite the relatively small numbers of mobilities at higher education institutions (HEI) and country-level funded by *Erasmus Mundus* (EM), Asian HE actors value the programme for two reasons. First, it allows Asian HE actors to formalise long-standing collaborative arrangements with European universities. These established ties usually follow colonial pathways, which means that not only will the traditional HE ties be with European universities of former colonial powers but also that Asian HE actors will tend to look for new ties in these European countries. Second, Asian HE actors also appreciate the European dimension of the programme. Unlike comparable mobility programmes, EM opens up a much wider field of teaching and research resources. Evidence gathered suggests that this European dimension is relevant at the level of teaching and research, at the level of networking, and also at the level of mutual intercultural learning. In terms of teaching, the European dimension of EM opens up a much wider spectrum of HE styles and approaches than traditional HE ties between Europe and Asia. In terms of sustainable HE networks, the European aspect of the *EM programme* provides Asian HEIs with much broader access to potential partners, while allowing them to maintain and nurture long-standing ties. In terms of mutual learning, the *EM programme* has provided Asian HEIs with a wider exposure to European universities. Significantly, the same is true for European HEIs. Data gathered in the desk and fieldwork phase shows that this has encouraged mutual learning at a regional level, as well as within specific EM projects. TEIN, in turn, has effectively expanded the potential for more and more intensive interaction between Asian and European universities in teaching and research. However, the development and dissemination of suitable applications has yet to utilise this potential effectively.

Regional-level EU support for HE in Asia has created effective gateways and pathways for upgrading teaching, research and learning capacity in Asian HEIs. The *EM programme* has enabled Asian post-graduates, post-doctorates and faculties to upgrade their skills formally (i.e. through degree programmes) and informally (i.e. by exposing Asian participants to European research and teaching practices). TEIN has made possible the launch of the pilot ASEAN Cyber University (ACU) project, aimed at providing e-learning to the ASEAN region. The research conducted indicates that these teaching and research networks are effective and productive. Furthermore, the *EM programme* has upgraded skills and generated research links without diverting academic human capital away from Asian HE systems. The participation in EU regional-level HE support – particularly the EM project – has exposed Asian HE actors to European HE governance practices and approaches. While there is little evidence of Asian HEIs adopting European HE governance approaches (with the possible exception of the ECTS system at ASEAN level), European ideas and approaches have shaped and influenced Asian HE policy deliberations. However, in addition to the administrative, legal and institutional barriers within national HE systems, the small number of actual interventions at national and HEI level have meant that the impact of regional-level EU interventions on teaching, research and governance capacity have remained highly localised. What is more, interviews reveal that there may be considerable unused scope for leverage and multiplier effects.

The regional-level EU support for HE has had little impact on wider human capital diversification, and on capacity growth for national development, for two distinct reasons. First, some measures and aspects of the EU-level support worked less well than expected. Despite efforts to address equity and access issues in the *EM programme*, it would seem that they have made little impression on barriers to HE participation. While the documentation suggests that the projects managed a more or less even gender balance, it has proved difficult to lower barriers to HE participation for members of disadvantaged social groups in Asia. In part, Asian HEIs experienced difficulties in defining and identifying members of the so-called Target Group 3 – a category of applicants designed to include marginalised and disadvantaged groups. More significantly, however, Asian HE actors report that they received very few suitable applications from members of these groups. Typically, the minimum requirements for participation in EM exchanges – most prominently, English language competence – prove to be prohibitive for members of disadvantaged groups in Asia. Furthermore, the EM and TEIN programmes could not contribute to encouraging a more active engagement of the private sector in research and teaching networks (the latter by design, the former by default). However, TEIN (though not EM) has man-

EQ5 – Overall assessment

aged to network research-active public sector organisations (such as meteorological offices) and Asian HEIs. Second, other measures and aspects of the EU regional-level support for HE worked effectively, but were too small at HEI and country-level to achieve measurable impacts. EM and TEIN both encouraged country-relevant research within their networks. The explicit inclusion of Asian country needs in Action 2 calls and in the European dimension of the programme have helped Asian scientists to align country-relevant research needs with HE resources in Europe. Asian scientists operating in countries with RTD policies that identify and financially support key research areas have found the European dimension of the *EM programme* particularly useful. Furthermore, the EM experience at any level equips individual beneficiaries with a wide range of career-relevant skills and knowledge. Not only do these skills give EM graduates an advantage on Asian labour markets, the prestige of possessing a foreign HE experience improves what is already a good standing with potential employers in Asia.

In summary, the EU's regional level support for HE has established gateways and highways to academically excellent HEIs in Europe. Unlike other mobility programmes, the European dimension of the EM programme provides access to a wide scope of HE teaching and research cultures for Asia students and faculty. The EM has also generated sustainable organisational ties between Asian and European HEIs. This access and the networks offer the potential for upgrading teaching, research and learning capacities in Asia. However, that potential has yet to be leveraged and multiplied beyond the level of individual HEIs. While European regional support has contributed to policy deliberation about HE governance practices in Asia, both the TEIN and EM programmes made little impact on wider human capital diversification.

4.5.1 JC 51: Degree to which regional-level EU support to Asia strengthened interconnectivity between research and education networks between Asia and Europe and within Asia

Overall, during the period under evaluation (2007-2013), regional-level EU support to Asian HE systems has contributed to deepening and extending the ties between European and Asian HEIs, as well as between Asian HEIs. The European dimension of the *EM programme* in particular has significantly contributed to widening the access to European HE resources, the creation of wider sustainable HE networks between Asia and Europe, and the mutual learning between Asian and European universities. EU regional-level support to Asian HE systems has contributed to increasing access to high quality research and teaching resources for Asian students and faculty. Evidence suggests that Asian students and faculties profited disproportionately from *Erasmus Mundus* programmes³³: more than half of Action 1 (category A) students originated from Asia. While the *EM programme* did not manage to mobilise the most prestigious European universities in the UK or France – notable exceptions being the University of Cambridge in the UK and Sciences Po in France –, participants and beneficiaries nevertheless perceived the participating European universities to be academically excellent. Furthermore, the intensity of competition for grants at institutional and student levels suggests that students and programme are both of a high quality. The table below compares applications to the EM Action 1 programmes to the actual number of grants dispersed.

Table 9 Overview of applications to the EM Action 1 programmes

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
Applications EMMC (EM Masters Course)	24,666	34,700	30,167
EMMC Scholarships	2,141	1,917	1,923
Success Rate	8.7%	5.5%	6.4%
Applications EMJD (EM Joint Doctoral)	1,971	3,335	4,226
EMJD Scholarships	130	216	298
Success Rate	6.6%	6.5%	7.1%

Source: EM Website (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/results_compendia/statistics_2012_en.php)

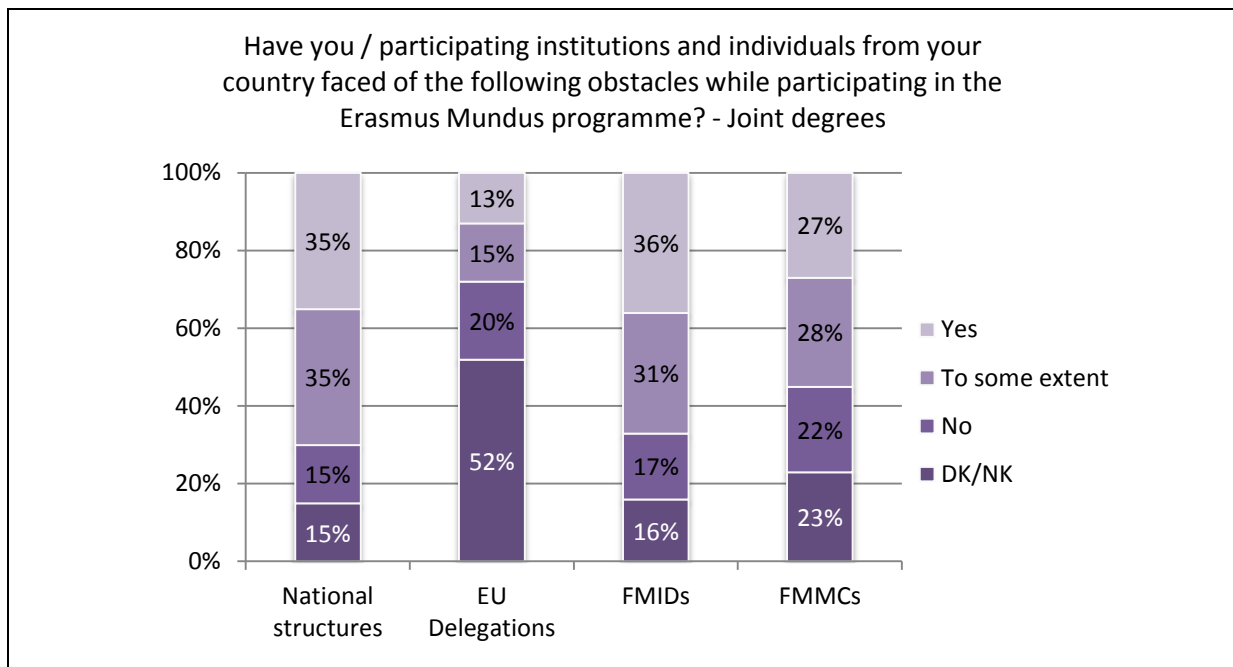
³³ The EM Programme consists of three Actions. Action 1 funds joint masters and doctoral programmes. Action 2 funds partnerships with HEIs in non-EU countries and provides scholarships for mobility of students and faculties. Action 3 is devoted to projects promoting European HE.

This means that 6.4%-8.7% of applicants received an EMMC (Erasmus Mundus Masters Course) scholarship between 2010 and 2012. Similarly, only about 7% of the applications to the EMJD (Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctoral) programme were successful. Additionally, survey data from the Mid-term Evaluation of the *Erasmus Mundus* programme (MTE 2012) indicates that co-students and faculties rated the quality of EM scholars highly. Evidence suggests that the competition among institutions for projects in the *EM programme* was also intense. In the years 2010-2012, Action 1 success rates varied between 28% and 16%. For Action 2 in the same time period, the success rate for Strand 1 projects fluctuated around the 40% mark. These success rates suggest a high degree of competition for the EM scholarships and EM project grants.

In general, the awards granted in all three Actions of EM were close to, or even exceeded, projections. The EM MTE reports that for Action 1, the number of EMJD courses chosen exceeded expectations (p.34). The increase in applications to the EMJD programme by about 20% from 2010-2012, illustrated in the table above, underlines this trend.

While survey data compiled for the EM MTE points to barriers to pursuing joint degrees (see Table below), fieldwork suggests that these problems may be less acute for Asian students and faculties. Evaluators for the MTR identified three significant barriers to EM mobility.

Figure 15 Prevalence of Obstacles Relating to Joint Degrees



Source: MTE 2012, p.41

First, large differences in tuition fees – particularly between UK universities and their counterparts on the continent – erect barriers for the participation of these universities in the *EM programme*. By the same token, Asian HE actors with traditional ties to the Anglophone world point out that the *EM programmes* provides access to less costly HE resources. Second, administrative and legal barriers – particularly visa requirements and institutional practices at the level of universities – have hampered mobility. Third, language barriers – particularly the inability of some European universities to offer courses in English – have undermined EM mobility. Interviews with institutional and individual Asian beneficiaries suggest that cost, administrative and organisational problems remain. These interviews also reveal that many problems have been effectively and competently solved by management at the level of individual EM projects.

The *TEIN4 programme* planned to offer innovative opportunities, including e-learning. While the pilot of the ASEAN Cyber University shows considerable promise, it would seem that the pace of development for applications for the TEIN network is not meeting the potential demand by Asian HEIs. The desk and the field research provides no indication that HE actors, either in Europe or in Asia, have explored the potential synergies between the two programmes. (*Indicator 511*)

Data suggest that the EU interventions have formalised and extended existing teaching and research networks across Europe and Asia, as well as within Asia. In the reporting period (2007-2012), all of the

EM Actions funded 161 partnerships featuring Asian HEIs. The following table shows the partnerships with HEIs from Asia funded under the Actions 1, 2 and 3 *Erasmus Mundus* programme.

Table 10 *EM Partnerships Featuring Asia HEIs*

Action	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
	Asia	%	Asia	%	Asia	%	Asia	%	Asia	%	Asia	%
A1 (EMMC)					11	21.6	4	13.8	5	16.1	5	16.7
A1 (EMJD)					4	30.8	0	0.0	1	9.1	1	11.1
A2 (ECW)	6	66.7	11	55.0	19	44.2						
A2 (Strand 1)							20	55.6	22	61.1	32	61.5
A2 (Strand 2)							3	60.0	2	50.0	1	100.0
A3	2	18.2	6	30.0	1	50.0	3	27.3	2	22.2		
Total	8	40.0	17	42.5	35	32.1	30	32.6	32	35.2	39	42.4

Source: EM Website (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/results_compendia/selected_projects_en.php)

The share of Asian HEIs in Action 1 (EMMC and EMJD) from 2009-2012 averaged 17%, but 44% of the partners in Action 2 projects of the same period were HEIs from an Asian country. This share rises to 57% if we include the ECW partnerships (2007-2009). Particularly in Action 2, evidence points to a number of consortia that have managed to operate across the different calls of the *EM programme*. While it would appear that these partnerships and networks have generated positive dispositions towards and useful practices concerning internationalisation, commentators note that the programmes may not have generated patterns of international HE co-operation where none previously existed. Evidence from fieldwork, however, suggests that Asian HE actors greatly value the way EM enables greater access to a wider spectrum of European universities than long-standing traditional ties – usually along colonial pathways.

In terms of sustainability of these networks, survey data shows that a solid majority of stakeholders (61% for Action 1 and 59% for Action 2) believe that specific courses and exchange programmes would not have taken place, and are less likely to continue, without EU funding. Nonetheless, interviews reveal that Asian HE actors understand the financial sustainability of EM consortia to be part of the more general question of HE network sustainability. Apart from financial support, they point out that good communication structures, student and faculty buy-in, as well as the development of concrete HE outputs, have contributed to the sustainability of HE networks between Asia and Europe. This would suggest that Asian HE actors understand the *EM programme* to be one of many (albeit rather distinctive and effective) means of pursuing their internationalisation strategies. (*Indicator 512*)

Data shows that EU regional interventions, in particular the *EM programme*, have enabled mutual learning at two distinct levels. First, the *EM programme* encouraged learning about Asian and European HE systems. Here, 14 of the *Action 3* projects have explicitly aimed at raising the profile of European HE in Asia. One indicator of the growing visibility of European universities in Asia is the increase in competition for EM scholarships: applications for EM doctoral scholarships increased by about 46%. Asian institutional beneficiaries of the *EM programme* also learned about different European universities through participation in Action 2 projects. The participation of European HE actors in EM projects, in turn, provided an opportunity for Europeans to challenge prejudices about Asian culture and Asian HE systems. Significantly, the participation in EM projects provided an opportunity for European and Asian HE actors to learn about HE resources in their own regions. Second, the *EM programme* also facilitated the exchange of teaching, research and governance practices within EM project consortia. Institutional beneficiaries point out that bi-directional exchanges would strengthen learning processes for European and Asian partners. They also say that more intensive bi-directional exchange would significantly contribute to institutionalising and disseminating lessons learned in teaching, research and governance from the EM experience. (*Indicator 513*)

4.5.2 JC 52: Extent to which regional-level EU support to Asia has enabled an increase in quality in teaching, research and governance in Asian higher education systems

Regional-level EU support for HE has extended the institutional space in which upgrading teaching, research and learning capacity in Asian HEIs takes place. However, overall impacts have been limited

by the volume of the HE interventions on the one hand and, on the other, by barriers within national HE systems in Asia to multiplier and dissemination effects.

The *EM*, as well as the *TEIN* programme, expands the potential for increasing capacity and quality of HE teaching in Asia. *EM* does this in two ways. First, since 2004, *Action 1 and Action 2 of the programme* have widened the access of Asian students to high quality HE courses (see Table 9).

Table 11 *Development of Masters and Doctoral Scholarships for Students from Asian Countries*

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
EMMC	55	451	914	1003	894	808	726	580	579	6010
EMJD							51	71	120	242
EM Scholars		9	48	84	97	136	152			526

Source: *EM Website* (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/results_compendia/statistics_en.php)

While the EMMC courses have actually decreased during the reporting period (from 1003 in 2007 to 579 in 2012), the participation of Asian students in EM doctoral programmes has steadily increased since 2010. Similarly, the number of mobile EM scholars from Asia has grown continuously since 2005, almost doubling during the reporting period (from 84 to 152). Action 2, in turn, enables Asian students to experience academic excellence at European universities. It would seem that it has also expanded the scope of countries from which these students originate, from 18 to 52 since 2004. Second, the EMJD and the EMMC programmes have contributed to upgrading HE teaching capacities in Asia by increasing the proportion of university instructors that hold a PhD. In terms of doctoral students, the Asian share of EMJD grants has steadily increased since 2010. Many Asian beneficiaries of EM grants are lecturers aiming to improve research and teaching skills. Selected case studies, as well as interviews with Asian beneficiaries, suggest that these PhD students mostly return to teach in HE systems in Asia, often because of a lack of attractive alternatives.

TEIN, in turn, has made possible the ASEAN Cyber University (ACU) project – currently in a pilot stage and available in four ASEAN countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam). Launched in 2012, the ACU project shows considerable promise, but a firm judgement on the project will need to be reserved for a later date when the project has been running longer.

However, the fieldwork implies that the effects on teaching capacity and quality have been modest. For EM, not only are the number of exchanges per country and per HEI small, the local administrative, legal and institutional factors often militate against leveraging and multiplying teaching capacity acquired through EM. Fieldwork data provides reason to believe that administrative and legal issues, as well as a lack of policy commitment from national HE policy-makers, may prove to be barriers for e-learning initiatives. Moreover, the survey of EUDs in Asia implies that many delegations come to similar conclusions: only two of the surveyed delegations perceive that EU HE interventions have improved the quality of teaching and research in their countries (EUD Survey, 2013). (*Indicator 521*).

Similarly, both desk and field research indicate that many Asian HEIs see the creation of sustainable research networks as being the central potential benefit of EM and, to a lesser degree, *TEIN* (field mission interviews, August 2013). This is particularly true for universities in more developed HE systems, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, India and, increasingly, Vietnam. Many Asian HE actors perceive programmes such as EM to be “springboards” for the development of collaborative research projects. Interviews during the field mission in August 2013 show that Asian institutional beneficiaries explicitly expect (and hope) that their EM alumni will forge new research ties.

Asian institutional beneficiaries, evaluators and monitors seem to agree that the *EM programme*, particularly the Action 1 EMJD programmes, has contributed to improving the volume, quality and visibility of research in the region. However, this assessment is largely based on fieldwork interviews, case study evidence and the reported perceptions of beneficiaries. Judging from this data, it would seem that the *EM programme* – specifically, the relatively new *EMJD programmes* -- provides opportunities for developing skills, research networks and publication opportunities. The EM research degrees offer Asian graduate students the opportunity to acquire and hone research skills and methodologies. Case study evidence and fieldwork data points to a high level of satisfaction on the part of the beneficiaries with their learning experience. These cases and our interviews show that co-ordinators, prospective faculty (currently PhD students) and visiting professors felt that they profited from the *EM programme* in terms of acquiring “*new methodologies, research skills and networks*” (EM MTE 2010, p.53, field mission interviews, August 2013) In addition, the joint doctoral degree programmes and scholar mobility both appear to have generated productive and sustainable research partnerships. The evaluators of

the EM MTE 2010 refer to interview data from the Action 2 project Eurasia 2, in which respondents pointed to the increased research output that resulted from the partnership (EM MTE 2101, p.40). Likewise, the data from fieldwork interviews provides some evidence that these partnerships resulted in the drafting of common conference papers, proposals and publications. This is the case despite administrative barriers that prevent EMJD grant holders from pursuing their fieldwork while on exchange. Overall, however, the desk and field research indicates that the impacts from *TEIN* and EM remain largely local, with considerable scope for leverage and multiplier effects. (*Indicator 522*)

EU regional level interventions in HE – particularly the *EM programme* – seem to have struck a balance between enabling academic mobility without unduly diverting human resources from Asian countries. For EM, fieldwork data shows that a significant majority of Asian HE actors do not perceive “brain-drain” (in this case, the departure of educated or professional people from one country to another) to be a problem, and do not believe that the *EM programme* has contributed to diverting intellectual capacity from Asian HE systems. Evaluations, monitoring reports and fieldwork interviews intimate that brain-drain is a complex macro-level phenomenon that emerges from individual career decisions, as well as from push and pull factors. These, in turn, are influenced by disciplinary idiosyncrasies, relative employment opportunities, and personal circumstances. So, while some mobility and human resource diversion is to be expected (and welcomed), it would seem that the EM projects have managed to devise effective institutional measures to prevent brain-drain. The table below shows a breakdown of courses with these types of features.

Table 12 Double, Joint and Multiple Degrees

Action	Year	Double	Joint	Multiple
EMJD	2010	6	9	1
	2011	9	9	5
EMJD Total		15	18	6
EMMC	2009	23	27	9
	2010	16	19	12
	2011	12	13	12
EMMC Total		51	59	33

Source: EM MTE, 2012, p.35

Data from desk research and fieldwork interviews revealed that Asian HE actors do not believe that EM or *TEIN* contributed to the pull factor for Asian research and teaching capacity. Data from interviews with individual and institutional beneficiaries in Asia, as well as case studies, suggest that EM courses attracted Asian lecturers aiming to upgrade their skill profile and with the expressed intention to return to Asian HEIs. (*Indicator 523*)

While the literature stresses that the *EM programme* was an effective vehicle for transporting European practices of HE governance (EM MTE 2012, p. 35, 36, 40; AF4 Asia Regional), the evidence from fieldwork interviews with Asian institutional and individual beneficiaries suggests that this has not necessarily resulted in the widespread implementation of European HE governance practices beyond the occasional ad hoc adoption of practices at HEI level. The data does, however, suggest that European HE practices have become a part of HE policy deliberation in many Asian countries. Interviews during the field mission showed that European HE practices – which range from rather general approaches, values and attitudes towards internationalisation to specific instruments and tools, such as the credit transfer systems, have become a part of the menu of policy options open to HE policy. (*Indicator 524*)

In summary, while the *EM programme* is very effective in upgrading skills and generating research networks, the data from desk and field research uncovered considerable unused scope for leverage and multiplier effects. It is, however, questionable whether the type of local focus required to effectively leverage qualification and research effects is within the scope of these regional HE programmes.

4.5.3 JC 53: Degree to which regional-level EU support to Asia has helped Asian universities to increase and diversify the human capital for national development processes

The survey of EUDs in Asia revealed that just under half of the delegations believe that regional-level EU support for HE has made a reasonable or substantial contribution to human capital diversity and capacity for national development. The other delegations, more cautiously, feel that *TEIN* and EM may have had a limited impact (EUD Survey, 2013). The data from desk and field research tends to lend support to the more sober assessment: while regional-level EU support for HE has contributed to human capital diversity, this contribution has been modest.

In terms of granting disadvantaged groups an equitable access to HE, the evidence is mixed. The *EM programme* overall does rather well in terms of gender balance. Although there is considerable room for improvement in individual aspects and disciplines – most notably the 75%-25% gender imbalance in favour of men among the Action 1 scholars – the programme managed to generate gender balanced flows of students and scholar. The tables below show the relative gender balance of Action 1 and Action 2 programmes overall.

Figure 16 Percentage of Women among Mobile Students and Scholars and gender balance among Action 2 beneficiaries



Source: MTE 2012, p.58

However, the imbalance among scholars (418 male to 108 female scholars between 2004 and 2010 for Asia) and PhD students (39% females for Category A and 49% females for Category B) points to structural barriers for the participation of women, particularly when balancing family and work with research responsibilities. The EM project aimed to promote vulnerable social groups through the Target Group (TG) 3 category in Action 2. However, desk and fieldwork data suggests that Asian HEI experienced great difficulties in defining and identifying these groups. This has meant that far fewer grants than planned were disbursed in this category. The case studies and monitoring reports reveal that the grants issued for TG3 students were in single digit figures for individual projects: for example, Eurasia2 reports of a single application from a refugee student from Myanmar, and a monitoring report points to four TG3 grants (out of 25 applications) (MR-137761.09, 2011). Interviews with institutional beneficiaries revealed that Asian HEIs receive few suitable applications from members of disadvantaged groups. First, individuals from these groups may not have access to communication channels through which EM scholarships are advertised. Second, and more significantly, members of disadvantaged groups in Asia may not meet the minimal academic requirement for an EM exchange – most notably, English-language competence. The data suggests that the university level may not be the most suitable level at which to address causes of HE exclusion for members of disadvantaged groups. (*Indicator 531*)

The EM and *TEIN* programmes have enabled Asian researchers to participate in research relevant to country needs. The *EM programme* does so in two distinct ways. First, the process of determining thematic areas for EM calls for proposals is designed to ensure relevance to the needs of third country participants. DG DEVCO – in consultation with EUDs and country experts – determine the thematic areas that EACEA then implements in their EM calls. However, it is notoriously difficult to assess with any precision whether the type of basic research funded by the *EM programme* is relevant to any specific country need. Of the six EMJD programmes featuring HEIs from Asian countries, only one – Sustainable Management and Design for Textiles – is arguably directly relevant to what commentators may consider pressing country needs in Asia. However, this is not to say that all programmes in the table are capable of significantly contributing to the development of human resources in Asian HE systems. Second, the European dimension of EM has enabled Asian researchers to find suitable HE resources for their research projects. Significantly, this is more effective for researchers in countries in which RTD policies clearly define and fund research areas of national interest. The access to a wide scope of European HE resources has helped these Asian researchers more easily to align thematic funding requirements at home with available HE resources and interests in Europe. *TEIN*, in turn, has provided a data infrastructure for Asian HE actors to define relevant research projects: these include telemedicine, weather and climate modelling, as well as grid computing. However, administrative and legal uncertainties at national levels may be resulting in a slower growth of *TEIN* network applications and relevant research. (*Indicator 532*)

Overall, neither EM nor *TEIN* have engaged and involved private and public sectors actors in research and teaching networks. In EM, public and private sector organisations participate as “associate members”. However, the existing documentation reveals less than a handful of companies in Action 2 projects of the 2010 selection. Interviews revealed that Asian institutional beneficiaries perceive the relations between universities and business/industry to be a key weakness of Asian HE systems. This bears out the indication in the data that financial commitments would not enable EM Action 1 research to continue without EU funding. Moreover, the fieldwork suggests that the *EM programme* did not contribute to establishing relations between businesses, industry and HEIs in Asia. Both the documentation and the fieldwork indicate that the non-university public sector organisations played no active part in EM research and teaching networks beyond traditional funding and regulatory roles. The *TEIN* programme, explicitly designed as a public alternative to commercial data networks, does not look to explicitly involve private sector actors in research and teaching networks. By enabling data transfer in areas such as telemedicine, as well as climate modelling and weather forecasting, *TEIN* has helped to engage research-active public sector organisations (i.e. hospitals and meteorological offices) with Asian HEIs. (*Indicator 533 and 534*)

The results of desk and fieldwork provide little cause to believe that Asian universities have adopted European HE practices for protecting minorities and vulnerable groups. While it would seem that individual EM projects have devised application processes and selection criteria aimed at providing an equitable access to HE for all social groups, this has not amounted to the adoption, or even adaptation, of European HE practices. Interviews with institutional beneficiaries suggest that equity and access issues are an integral part of HE policy debates in many Asian countries. Implicitly, Asian HE actors doubt the extent to which regional-level EU interventions have contributed to these debates. (*Indicator 535*)

EM experience, interviews and desk research imply that the *EM programme* equips students and academics/scholars with the skills, practical knowledge and networks to further careers in any field. Yet, institutional and individual beneficiaries interviewed also agree that the *EM programme* is too small to have a noticeable impact on the situation of graduates in Asia. In terms of the development of careers of EM graduates, commentators seem to agree that the EM experience is not only personally enriching, but also leaves graduates in a strong position on labour markets in Asia. Employers in Asia value an EM experience at least as highly as any other form of exchange or studies abroad. Employment figures, however, do not reflect these advantages quite as clearly. While successive surveys of EM phases show that EM graduates do rather well in terms of employment, it also suggests that their extra skills do not protect them any more effectively from economic downturn than people with other degrees. While no data is available for salary and income development, the MTE suggests that the employment rewards of the EM experience are predominantly non-monetary: survey data seems to suggest that EM graduates find employment that provides a higher degree of job satisfaction (EM MTE 2012, p.50). Interview data from institutional and individual beneficiaries also suggests that EM graduates have to expect relative income losses. (*Indicator 536*)

4.6 EQ6 on support to uprooted people

EQ6: To what extent has regional-level EU support to uprooted people contributed to reintegrating refugees, returnees, ex-combatants and internally displaced people into the socio-economic fabric?

As part of its efforts to promote peace and security and to address human rights issues, democracy, good governance, and rule of law in the Asia region, the RSP 2007-13 identified Support to Uprooted People as one of its three priority areas. In 2001-2006, EUR 270 million was spent on assisting uprooted people in the Asia region. The relevance of such actions was confirmed during an evaluation of Regulation EC 2130/2001 in 2004. The programme was praised for its flexibility in adjusting to the changing phases of crises and to the diversity of needs encountered.

Support to Uprooted People is aimed at integration of refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs), returnees, and former combatants. Particularly difficult is integration into the labour market – a vital component of ensuring livelihoods. Refugees will not have the right to work. Returnees, IDPs, and ex-combatants, while they have the right to work in their country of origin, may face administrative difficulties in obtaining legal status (such as lost personal documents). Uprooted persons who are re-settled in a third country will be treated as legal migrants, but again will face integration difficulties.

Countries and country-complexes affected include Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iran, Myanmar-Thailand-Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal-India, The Philippines, and Sri Lanka. EU interventions covered: capacity building/livelihood security for refugees, IDPs and returnees; sustainable food production; basic health; psycho-social services; water and sanitation; basic urban services and housing; basic education; access to higher education, and vocational training; strengthening the capacity of target groups for repatriation, resettlement, or integration into host communities; access to credit and legal support; human rights of refugees, migrants and IDPs, including with regard to forced labour, prostitution, sexual and gender-based violence, forced migration; and promoting peace-building and reconciliation. In answering this EQ, we have chosen to focus on three crises: the Afghan crisis (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran), the Myanmar crisis (Myanmar, Thailand, Bangladesh), and the Sri Lanka crisis. The first two involve cross-border aspects and refugees, while the latter focuses on IDPs. The Aid to Uprooted People (AUP) response in Afghanistan has been thoroughly evaluated, while the Myanmar crisis provides a good opportunity to study the role of political and policy dialogue at the bilateral and regional (ASEAN) level.

EQ6 – Overall assessment

The answer to this EQ is based on a document review of AUP-financed actions, analysing CSPs, ROMs, MTRs, and evaluations in Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iran, Myanmar-Thailand-Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. These actions have been well monitored, reviewed, and evaluated, and there is no evidence that they have deviated significantly from international standards in the area of linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) – that is, contributing towards durable solutions promoting the re-integration of refugees, returnees, IDPs, and ex-combatants into the social fabric. The quality of interventions was confirmed during field missions to Thailand and Myanmar. In the area of basic services, the EU placed appropriate emphasis on provision of basic medical care (emphasising the needs of women and other vulnerable groups), education, clean water and sanitation, psycho-social services, and legal advice. Not all projects addressed all areas, but, in general, projects were integrative when they needed to be (e.g., health and water and sanitation together). In many settings, the EU was the main provider of needed basic services to large groups of uprooted people.

Most actions investigated – unless tightly focused on, for example, legal advice or medical services – addressed livelihood issues, such as job skills, sustainable agricultural production, cash income. Again, the EU played a major role in the region. As in the case of basic services, due attention was paid to involving host communities and residents of areas surrounding refugee camps in order to promote equity and integration, and special attention was paid to addressing women's needs.

In general, the monitoring, review and evaluation documents consulted all concluded that AUP actions have been implemented in adherence to good international practice in the pursuit of LRRD. However, CSPs, EAMRs, and the Asia RSP contain little information on the political dialogue surrounding uprooting. Descriptions of actions in policy forums such as ASEM do not refer to uprooted people. However, the field mission revealed that in both Myanmar and Thailand, there has been considerable political dialogue on the entire range of issues related to uprooting. These include the issue of refugees in the camps, IDPs, and the emerging crisis of the Rohingya and related inter-communal violence. Despite the lack of a common vocabulary – for example, in official terms, there are no IDPs in Myanmar,

EQ6 – Overall assessment

and uprooted persons sheltered in camps in Thailand are not refugees – there have been discussions. No evidence was found, however, of similar political dialogue at the regional level. Both EU and government officials interviewed were of the view that ASEAN, a consensus-based organisation, is not able to deal effectively with refugee issues. This is, of course, a considerable disappointment because many of these problems are, by nature, regional (e.g., the Rohingya crisis) and call for regional approaches.

To summarise, AUP-financed interventions have delivered a significant amount of LRRD in the context of crises of uprooting. There have been solid achievements in provision of basic social services. Related issues, such as labour migration and other migration and asylum issues, have not been very much integrated, opening possible opportunities for Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI) action, if not AUP action. While cross-border aspects have not been entirely absent (e.g. Sri Lanka-India and Afghanistan-Pakistan), AUP continues to be largely a country-based programme. Examples were found of excellent co-ordination between national programmes – for example AUP Thailand and AUP Myanmar, including co-ordination between EUDs and ECHO field offices. In general, though, the regional nature of some uprooting crises, such as the Rohingya crisis, calls for at least a sub-regional mechanism, and sometimes even a regional mechanism.

The following box provides a short introduction to and overview of the AUP programmes in Myanmar, Thailand, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka.

Box 6 AUP Programme information

Myanmar programme information

With a population of over 50 million (official estimate), Myanmar has suffered from 50 years of civil war, military rule, and international isolation, from which it is just now apparently emerging. Specific problem areas include Northern Ralchine State, from where a quarter of a million Muslim Rohingya sought refuge in Bangladesh in the 1990s. Many have now returned, but face problems of discrimination. Also a focus of need is eastern Myanmar, where conflict drove an estimated 450,000 people from their homes, many fleeing into refugee camps in Thailand, where, in some cases, they have lived for 20 years. Displacement takes many forms, including displacement induced by armed conflict, by state-society conflict, and by livelihood-vulnerability.

The EU is the largest source of aid to uprooted people in Myanmar, not only through AUP, but also through ECHO and thematic programmes. This raises issues of co-ordination, including with non-state actors (NSA), food security programmes (FSPs), Migration and Asylum programmes, and Investing in People programmes. EU Member States active in Myanmar include UK, Sweden, Norway. Other countries involved include the US, Switzerland, Australia, and Japan. The EU's first Strategy Paper and MIP for Myanmar (2007-2013) stressed health and education. Both of these, but especially the first, have been consistently integrated into *AUP interventions*. Basic *AUP* objectives in Myanmar, according to Action Fiches 7, year 2009 (EU contribution EUR 9 million, total programme cost EUR 11.5 million) and 8 (2011-13, EU contribution EUR 15 million, total programme cost EUR 15.8 million) are support to LRRD, improved livelihoods and living conditions (including re-integration, protection), and promoting reconciliation and conflict resolution.

Thailand programme information

EU actions are concentrated on the nine refugee camps along the 2,000km border with Myanmar, and, in order to reduce tensions and defuse resentment, surrounding countries in the region. Problems identified in the 2007 Action Fiche were food and livelihood insecurity, limited access to basic health and nutrition services (especially for women of child-bearing age, children, and the elderly), limited access to education, and insufficient protection from serious human rights abuses (including gender-based violence) and from landmines. Resettlement of refugees into third countries has been a mixed blessing, as it has tended to empty camps of the most talented and energetic residents, while attracting non-refugee Burmese residents – often in irregular situations – into the camps in Thailand in hopes of achieving resettlement. Many economic migrants from Myanmar also live in the region, few of them with the Thai national identity card that gives access to health and education services. Not discussed here is the entirely different problem of H'mong refugees from Lao PDR in the south of the country.

The EU's support to people in the camps has been provided through ECHO, focusing on short-term provision of basic services, and AUP, which has tried to move increasingly in the direction of LRRD. Following Action Fiches 2007 (EU contribution EUR 8 million, total programme cost EUR 10 million) and 2009 (EU contribution EUR 9 million, total programme cost EUR 11.2 million), specific AUP objectives have been improving livelihoods and increasing access to health and education services, both within the overall context of seeking long-term, sustainable solutions. Notably missing is promoting return because, as explicitly stated, conditions at the time were judged to be too unsettled for return to be a viable option. Views on that are probably shifting in light of recent changes in Myanmar, and it can be expected that a significant strategic reconsideration is now ongoing. Target populations are camp residents, displaced persons living in areas surrounding the camps, and local communities (often populated mostly by ethnic minorities) in areas surrounding the camps. Livelihoods have been promoted

through skills training and sustainable food production. Water and sanitation, health (often with a focus on reproductive health, maternal and child health, and HIV/AIDS), and education assistance have been provided.

Throughout the process, the EU and donors have engaged the Thai government in an attempt to encourage acceptance of long-term approaches. There have been limited successes (such as agreement to introduce vocational and skills training to promote a lifetime livelihood approach), but a number of points of disagreement remain on issues such as registration of new camp arrivals and the status of refugees outside the camps.

Bangladesh programme information

Beginning in the 1990s, roughly a quarter of a million members of the Muslim minority Rohingya group sought refuge in Bangladesh. In response, UNHCR set up 20 refugee camps. Subsequent voluntary repatriation led to the return of all but about 20,000 refugees to Myanmar. However, in addition to the official refugees, an estimated 200,000 Rohingya have entered Bangladesh undocumented and merged with the local population, mostly in Cox's Bazaar. Competition for scarce resources has led to significant erosion of the initial spirit of charity and welcome that greeted the Rohingya. These people are considered by the Government of Bangladesh to be illegal economic migrants. AUP Calls for Proposals in the mid-2000s failed, partly to intransigence by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), which was reluctant to allow any interventions improving the situation of refugees and uprooted persons, for fear of attracting even more. However, dialogue with government – including action of the co-ordinated Dhaka Steering Committee made up of 11 Embassy Heads of Mission and UN organisations – and the election of a new government opened the door for more active intervention in 2009. As the Action Fiche 2009 put it, *“The most significant development to complement [...] progress has been the softening of GoB stance with regard to the concept of self-reliance and freedom of movement showing that continuous and proactive lobbying by the donors.”*

The EU response (Action Fiche 2009) was been to finance UNHCR in an attempt to deal with the livelihood needs of the legal refugees in camps and to open a call for proposals to NGOs to work with Rohingya outside the camps, as well as local communities – mostly with regard to health, water and sanitation, employment, capacity building of local government, and gender-related issues.

Afghanistan programme information

About 2.8 million Afghan refugees live in Pakistan and 1 million in Iran – many of them having done so for over 20 years, many having been born outside their homeland, many with no intention of returning, and many in irregular situations. While UNHCR estimates that 56 million Afghan refugees have returned since 2002, increasing the population within the border by 20%, these face severe challenges of re-integration, and there has been a slow-down in the pace of return. At the same time, flows of people into and out of Afghanistan are increasingly for the purpose of economic migration. The multi-country aspect and the mixture of displacement and migration call for a regional, multi-dimensional approach.

Specific EU areas of action included legal assistance to refugees in Pakistan and Iran, support to community development and planning in Afghanistan, and support to government institutions responsible for return and re-integration – most specifically for monitoring human rights and for running the faltering land distribution scheme.

The EU's CSP/MIP 2007-2010 concentrated on rural development, health, and governance. Other programmes active include ECHO and NSA-LA, both mostly in the area of water and sanitation. The basic AUP objective in Afghanistan and surrounding countries, according to Action Fiches for 2009 (EU contribution EUR 17 million, total programme cost EUR 24.2 million) and 2011-13 (EU contribution EUR 27 million, total programme cost EUR 88.7 million), is promoting voluntary return and re-integration by improving return conditions in Afghanistan and providing assistance for refugees in Iran and Pakistan, including promoting regional dialogue.

Sri Lanka Programme information

In Sri Lanka, the EU-funded AUP Action Fiche (“Support to conflict-affected IDP returnees and communities through housing in north and east Sri Lanka”) estimated the total number of conflict IDPs to be 435,000 and the number of returnees to be 515,000 – implying over a million people living in conditions of violence, rampant human rights violations, and severe deprivation. Following the peak of fighting in 2008-2009, a concerted policy of return was instituted, but the main needs were housing, followed by livelihoods. The basic AUP goal was to supply housing and the necessary secondary infrastructure for returning displaced persons, as well as for new displaced persons. Challenges included: the breakdown of the land ownership registration system, either by the destruction of registers or by the loss of papers by IDPs during displacement; and the limited time that beneficiaries could contribute to construction because, as farmers, their work was required in the fields.

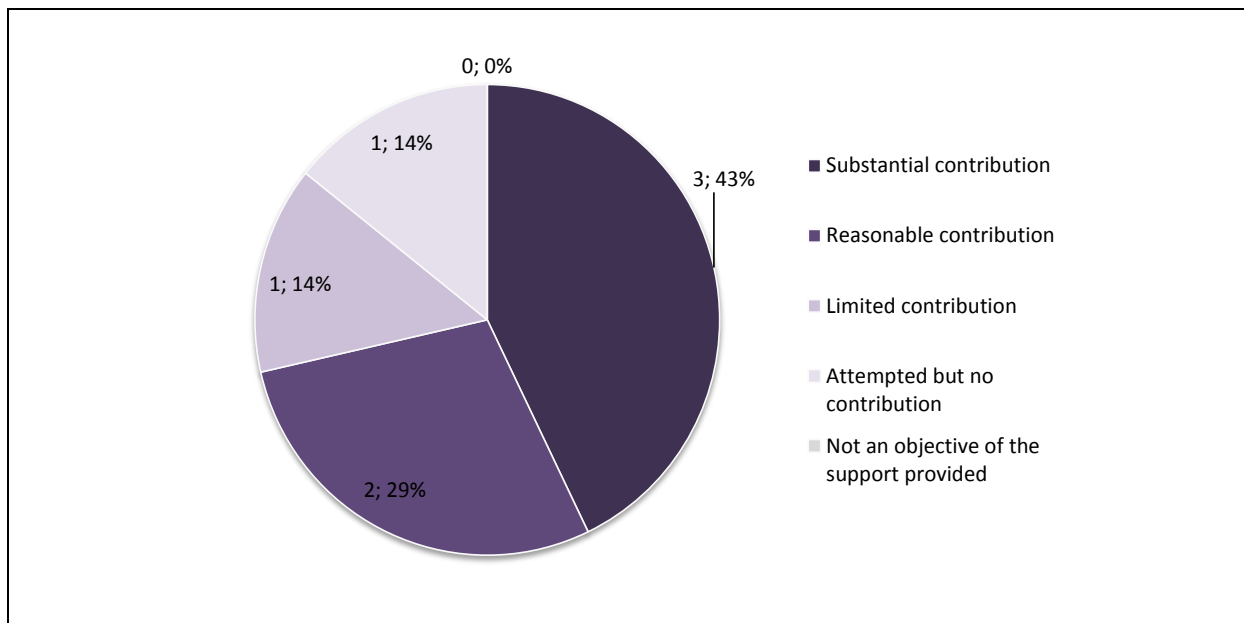
4.6.1 JC 61: Degree to which foundations for sustainable livelihoods have been created for refugees, IDPs, returnees, and ex-combatants in the civil sector

Most of the actions investigated here contained components related to livelihoods. Exceptions were highly focused or specialised actions – for example, provision of medical services to Afghan refugees in Iran, or legal services in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Whether in camps or host communities in Myanmar and Thailand, regions receiving returnees in Afghanistan, or Northern Sri Lanka, support to uprooted people generally tried to involve beneficiaries in construction (sometimes in the context of cash for work), to promote agricultural production, and to build capacity for sustainable livelihoods. In the

case of Thailand, the EU funded an innovative and highly successful Vocational and Educational Training (VET) programme in the camps. As prospects for return have improved, this programme has proved to be extremely popular with camp residents, who see it as contributing to a possibly brighter post-return future. The emphasis on livelihoods was clear in the context of LRRD, and sometimes – as in Thailand and, to lesser extent, in Bangladesh – this required a discussion in government to overcome initial fears that beneficiaries were being assisted in settling there permanently. In Thailand, discussions were necessary in order to launch the highly successful EU-backed vocational education programme.

Close to half of 7 EUDs responding to the survey in this evaluation felt that the EU's assistance through AUP had contributed to sustainable livelihoods (see accompanying Figure). However, long-term sustainability must be seen in the context of the legal situation of uprooted people. For example, in Thailand, the programme to support refugees (a term not accepted by Thai authorities) is based on the premise that, if the peace process in Myanmar continues to go well, there will be a large-scale return to that country, where current refugees will re-install themselves. The EU has contributed greatly to improving the ability of the refugees to do so. However, if they wish to remain in Thailand, or if they return and subsequently wish to work in Thailand again, the skills they have learned will not be (legally) applicable. (*Indicator 611*)

Figure 17 EUD survey results: AUP contributed to creating a foundation for sustainable livelihoods for refugees, IDPs, returnees, and ex-combatants in the civil sector in your country



Source: EUD survey

In a related point, it has sometimes been necessary to overcome fears that, by improving conditions in camps, further inflows of refugees would be encouraged, and that the risk of their choosing to remain would increase. No examples were found of actions dealing specifically with legal issues related to employment; the actions were, rather, broader. In every such action reviewed, there was a special effort to promote economic self-sufficiency of women, and attempts were made to identify and target other vulnerable groups. ROMs, MTRs, and evaluations generally gave actions good marks for incorporating cross-cutting issues.

Despite its emphasis on regional economic integration, ASEAN does not appear capable of dealing effectively with labour migration, and has been absent from discussions on uprooting. These represent opportunities missed. (*Indicator 612*)

Actions specifically focused on ex-combatants were not found in any of the country programmes reviewed, although a handful were known to have existed. For example, AUP intervened in the repatriation of Hmong fighters from Thailand to Lao PDR – a process that was poorly handled and has made the Thai government very cautious about how it proceeds on the Myanmar border. While no explicit information was received during the field phase, the situation may simply be that the security situation

in Myanmar is still so fraught that identifying population groups as “ex-combatants” would be premature. One fact that emerged was the extremely strong role played by the political wing of armed groups in the Thai refugee camps.

Food security has been a main concern of all interventions where it was relevant. Food distribution mechanisms in camps were strengthened in Bangladesh, with positive impacts on nutrition. In Myanmar and Thailand, uprooted persons were trained in sustainable farming techniques, contributing both to better nutrition and also promoting environmental sustainability. No information was found on forestry. (*Indicator 614*)

In the programmes reviewed, no evidence has been found of programmes specifically aimed at ex-combatants. While less information has been gained on IDPs than on cross-border uprooted persons, it is clear that security conditions have affected the ability of AUP to establish the foundations for sustainable livelihoods. (*Indicator 613*)

To summarise, AUP interventions have helped to create conditions for sustainable livelihoods in camps, and more broadly by education and training, but the context in which these livelihoods will be earned remains uncertain. Where skills have been taught, the question remains as to where they will be exercised. The number of people resettled is often very small, so the exercise of new skills in third countries appears rather small. The presumption is often that people will return to their country or region of origin, meaning that few people trained will be able to exercise their skills in the host country. However, many will not want to return, but the opportunities to exercise the skills gained may be insufficient.

4.6.2 JC 62: Degree to which political dialogue on legal status and rights of uprooted people helped promoting durable solutions

One of the principal questions remaining open at the end of the desk phase was the extent to which issues of uprooting had been integrated into political dialogue. Based on field phase interviews, these issues figure prominently in bilateral political dialogue, but much less so in regional dialogue – at least, at the level of ASEAN. In the actions reviewed, inter-country discussions on repatriation would be relevant only for Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iran and Myanmar-Thailand-Bangladesh. There was documentary evidence of multi-country discussions and dialogue in the first case, but none in the second. However, interviews at EUDs and Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Thailand and Myanmar confirmed the pursuit of discussions.

This covers not only the long-term refugee problem and related return issues, but also the more recent and still emerging Rohingya crisis.

In the Afghan crisis, the EU has encouraged dialogue between Afghanistan and Pakistan, aimed at better treatment of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The recognition that most cross-border flows now consist of migrants, rather than refugees, has also encouraged a regional policy dialogue. Many examples have been found of effective dialogue at the lowest level – for example, UN-HABITAT and ASB interceding with the Sri Lankan government to resolve land ownership issues; NGOs negotiating with regional officials in Myanmar to facilitate project activities in “hot” zones; NGO negotiation with regional officials in Bangladesh to soften attitudes to refugees and uprooted Rohingya. Many of these interventions, often ad hoc, appear to have been highly effective, although some failed. They could be considered as advocacy activities.

Moving to a higher level, EU-financed actions negotiated with the Thai central government on access to the national health service, and raised the issue of the conditions of detention for Rohingya illegally in the country. In Bangladesh and Pakistan, agencies responsible for AUP actions discussed refugee status issues with central government. In the first of these two cases, this resulted in a tangibly more accommodating attitude of government towards EU-financed improvements in camp conditions. However, references to such discussions remain at the project-related level. It is striking that there is virtually no reference to co-ordinated bilateral or regional policy dialogue related to uprooted people in CSPs and RSPs, EAMRs, and documents related to regional policy. The exception is regional dialogue promoting better understanding of migration issues in the Afghanistan context. In the case of ASEAN, the lack of reference to regional political dialogue on uprooting reflects the reluctance of that organisation to engage in the problem. (*Indicator 621, 622 and 623*)

It is highly unlikely that IDP issues have not been integrated into EU bilateral political dialogue, yet documents reviewed never mention this. Problems of IDPs figure in political dialogue in Myanmar, but there are limitations, since the official government position is that there are no displaced people in the country, only voluntary internal migrants. (*Indicator 624*)

Regional and global programmes other than *AUP* contributed to better approaches to migration, but there is no evidence that *AUP* did so, or that other more migration-oriented forms of action included uprooting as a theme. Migration, like uprooting, is an area in which ASEAN has been essentially inactive, which is striking in view of its emphasis on regional economic integration and the high degree of migration now taking place, and very likely to increase in the future. One exception is that actions designed to deal with uprooted Afghans in Pakistan and Iran have increasingly taken into account the fact that most cross-border flows for a number of years have been migratory in nature. However, this is a change in outlook that has been bottom-up, essentially initiated at the level of actions and country programmes. The new EU Communication on Migration (2013) 292 makes no note of the grey area between migration and uprooting. No sign has been found in policy dialogue or discussions focusing on the contentious issue of whether uprooted persons are irregular migrants, as host governments would usually prefer to regard them, or persons who have moved due to extreme distress beyond their control. In Thailand, many camp residents, having acquired education and skills (including Thai language skills), will have little interest in returning to or, even if returned, remaining in, agricultural zones that many of them will never have seen. Meaningful discussion of this looming issue appears to be mostly limited to international partners. (*Indicator 625*)

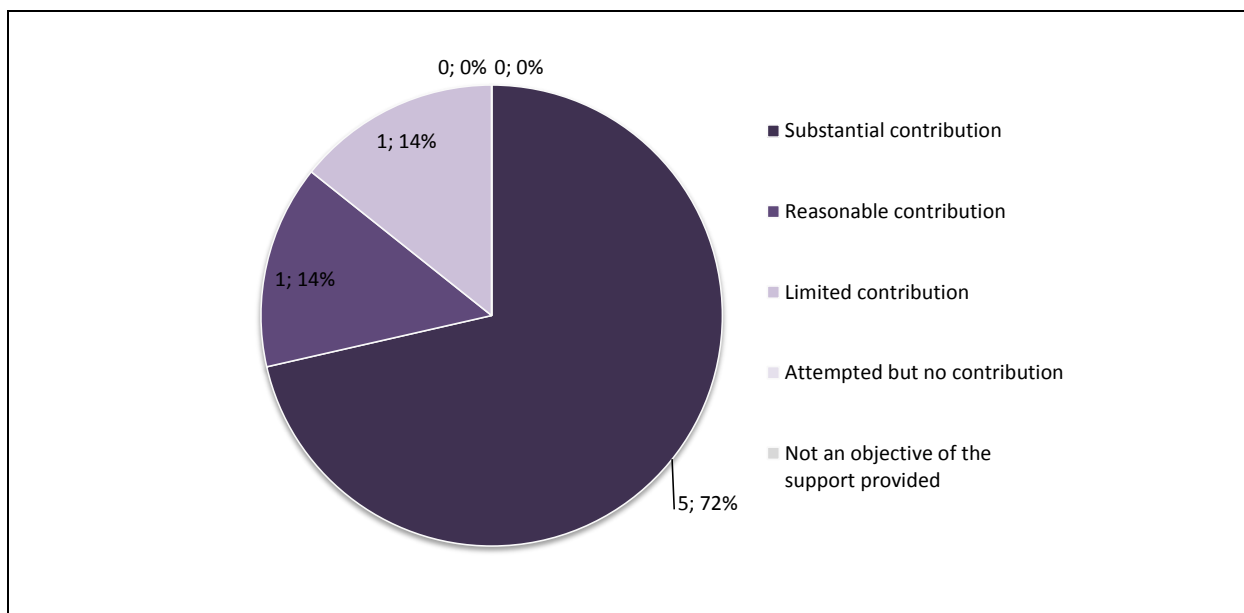
To summarise, at the end of the Desk Phase it was pointed out that virtually no “paper trail” of political dialogue related to uprooting had been found. Interviews conducted in the field phase in Thailand and Myanmar corroborated that such political dialogue has, in fact, been a consistent feature of EU-Government bilateral political discussions. However, the evident absence of regional-level political dialogue on uprooting continues to be striking, apart from desk-phase documentary evidence of multi-country dialogue concerning the Afghanistan crisis (which did not, however, involve SAARC). It is likely that the reason for the lack of regional-level dialogue is the politically-loaded nature of the situations that give rise to uprooting.

4.6.3 JC 63: Degree to which EU support helped improving access to basic services

AUP has been a major provider of basic services to uprooted populations in need. EU actions financed under *AUP* placed appropriate emphasis on improving the access of uprooted people to health and education, clean water and basic sanitation, and, where appropriate, services of special importance to women (e.g. SGBV, child nutrition) and other vulnerable groups (e.g. those at risk of, or suffering from, HIV/AIDS).

Not surprisingly, in view of the major role of the EU in providing social services – especially in the areas of health and education – to uprooted people, almost three-quarters of EUDs responding to the survey judged that the EU had made a substantial contribution.

Figure 18 *EUD survey results: AUP contributed to improving access to basic services for refugees, IDPs, returnees, and ex-combatants*



Source: EUD survey

ROMs, MTRs, and evaluations have given varying reports – for example, sustainability is often in doubt, delays were not uncommon – but the overall judgement is that the EU has, by helping to improve access to basic social services, made a significant contribution to improving the lives of uprooted people, promoting conflict mitigation, and encouraging voluntary return. All of this has been in the spirit of LRRD and promoting re-integration into the social fabric. The complementarity between ECHO, delivering emergency humanitarian assistance, and AUP, delivering LRRD after the initial crisis has passed, has generally been taken advantage of in the early stages of crises, although ECHO (not the subject of this evaluation) has often remained on the spot long after the initial crisis has past.

An advantage of the EU is that it is able – because of significant amounts of money at its disposal, a long-term perspective, and high quality implementing partners – to offer comprehensive services, as in the case of Bhutanese refugees and asylum-seekers in Nepal. At several points, as stated above, it has been necessary to overcome government resistance to improvements in living conditions that might attract more uprooted persons or encourage those already in place to gain a permanent foothold. It is widely believed, for example, that the educational opportunities available in Thai refugee camps have been a pull factor attracting persons into the camps, where they often remain unregistered. In Bangladesh, where authorities were extremely concerned about the pull factor, the EC used political dialogue to urge the government to allow NGOs access to camps containing Rohingya refugees (*Indicator 631 and 633*)

In Afghanistan and in Pakistan, the EU financed major efforts to provide needed legal services to returnees, in the first case, and potential returnees, in the second. In Sri Lanka, tackling problems of land registration basically amounts to providing legal advice. In Thailand, the EU financed legal counselling services, although these services, significantly, did not include advising on rights after return. (*Indicator 632*)

The evaluation found ample evidence (for instance, in the mid-term evaluations or ROM reports) that actions promoting access to basic services targeted especially vulnerable populations and addressed women's needs in areas such as health and SGBV. As examples, EC-financed activities in Thailand improved access to justice for women suffering from violence, and provided integrated health and psycho-social services (including, in the latter case, for male perpetrators of violence).

EU-financed health interventions have contributed significantly to cross-border and global efforts to address issues such as drug-resistant TB and drug-resistant malaria. In providing health services to uprooted persons suffering from tuberculosis and malaria, the EU has contributed not only to addressing the needs of individuals, but also addressing regional and global health issues. (*Indicator 634*)

4.7 EQ7 on regional strategy

EQ7: To what degree has the regional-level EU support been responsive to the priorities and needs of the key partners in Asia and in line with the overall EU development and policy framework?

The policy framework for the EU's actions in Asia is based on the Communication "Europe and Asia: A Strategic Framework for Enhanced Partnerships" of 2001, which defined the overall strategic approach for the EU's relations with Asia. The Communication emphasises that "*Asia is a crucial economic and political partner for Europe. More than ever before, the EU and its Asian partners should work together in addressing the global challenges which we both face, and the global opportunities which we should all be able to share. [The EU's] Asian partners are invited to reflect on their side on how we might address these issues together.*"

Within this framework, development co-operation ranks high. The EU allocated more than EUR 5 billion to Asia for the period 2007-2013. In line with the European Consensus on Development, the Asia strategy – as with all regional strategies and programmes – aims at contributing to the overarching objective of poverty reduction, while fostering development based on Europe's democratic values: respect for human rights, democracy, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, good governance, gender equality, solidarity, social justice, environmental sustainability, and effective multi-lateral action.

Hence, the rationale to assess the relevance of the RSP is threefold. The EQ looks at the relevance of the strategy: a) as measured against the development priorities of the EU's Asian partners; b) in relation to the overall EU development framework, which is based on five thematic programmes under DCI and other instruments complementing DCI; c) as measured against the EU's overall policy framework for its relations with Asia. This EQ draws on synthesised findings from EQs 1 to 6, extensive document

research, the survey of the EUDs, and stakeholder interviews in Brussels and all nine countries selected for the field phase.

This evaluation question addresses the overall strategic direction of EU-Asia relations. It asks whether and to what extent priorities in general, and the process of planning and designing the strategy in particular, have responded to the development objectives of the EU's key partners in Asia – with a particular emphasis on the sub-regional organisations ASEAN and SAARC and the trans-regional dialogue forum ASEM. The EQ also focuses on the strategy's alignment with, and embeddedness in: (i) the broader context of EU development co-operation, as defined by DCI and its thematic programmes, as well as EIDHR and IfS; (ii) other financing instruments.

EQ7 – Overall assessment

Answering the question of whether regional-level EU support has been responsive to the needs and priorities of Asian partners requires two different angles. First, the Asia strategy is well aligned with the partners' development agenda. In the RSP itself, and more specifically in the programme and project documentation, the evaluation team found extensive needs analyses and generally detailed elaboration on the overall context in which interventions operate and the challenges they face. This, together with the consideration of lessons-learned from previous strategies and programmes – especially with regard to a previous lack of co-ordination and synergies between regional-level and bilateral interventions – leaves no doubt that EU stakeholders are very serious about achieving a high level of relevance for their strategies relating to Asia. Second, however, the EU's responsiveness to partner needs does not necessarily extend to the active involvement of these partners in the development of co-operation strategies. There was no direct interaction with Asian stakeholders in the process of designing the RSP itself, although several evaluation reports elaborate on the participation of Asian stakeholders in the design of individual programmes under the strategy. Well-functioning dialogues with Asian partners on the strategy, mainly related to matters of implementation, were reported for only four out of 13 countries. At the same time, the degree of communication on strategy in individual programme and thematic areas depends very much on the capacity, capabilities and, not least, the will of the respective partners to engage in such a dialogue. ASEAN is the clearest case of a partner that takes a pro-active approach to addressing its needs in strategy discussions with the EU. The EU ASEAN Joint Project Design Teams, which have been in existence since the mid-term review, provide suitable forums to this end, in addition to the existing network of communication channels. However, the same does not apply to SAARC, which, like several other partners, lacks comprehensive and concise strategies of its own, making it difficult for the EU to know exactly what the priorities and key agendas are. Even ASEAN has found it impossible to enunciate a regional strategy in politically more sensitive areas, such as with regard to uprooted people particularly.

Overall, and regardless of the specific direct involvement of Asian partners in strategy development and design, the evaluation has not come across any glaring mismatches between the regional strategy and what can reasonably be assumed to be the needs and priorities of key partners. In a similar vein, there are no incidences that would point to major inconsistencies between the regional strategy and the overall EU development and policy framework. In fact, in all core areas – trade, environment, higher education, health, and human security – evaluation reports, other documents and stakeholder interviews confirm the coherence of the programmes under the RSP with the respective policy fields.

The assessment is less straightforward on the strategy's coherence with DCI-financed thematic programmes and other financing instruments. In neither case are inconsistencies or incoherence evident, but EU documents and independent evaluation reports rarely mention coherence – let alone elaborate on it. One EUD aptly summarised this point as “*no coherence, but no conflict either*”. There is potentially a missed opportunity because a comprehensive analysis of coherence between and among different programmes and instruments is an essential precondition for achieving or strengthening synergies in development co-operation.

4.7.1 JC 71: Extent to which the intervention strategy responds to, and is co-ordinated with, the agenda of key Asian partners, particularly ASEAN, SAARC and ASEM

The correspondence of the strategy to the partners' development agendas is assessed through: the existence of needs analyses in programming documents; the level of involvement of Asian stakeholders in the design of the strategy; the extent to which lessons have been learned from preceding strategies; how much the recommendations of previous Asia-related evaluations have been considered; how the objectives of regional-level EU support correspond to the strategic objectives of Asian part-

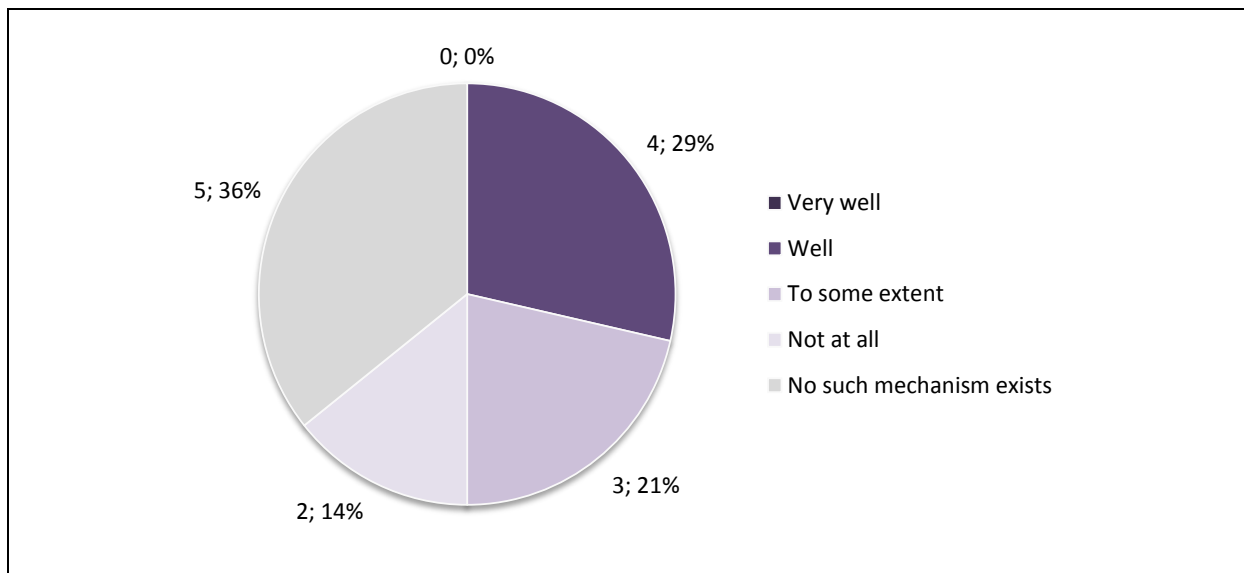
ners; and any evidence of functioning dialogue mechanisms on strategy between the EU, sub-regional partners and partner governments.

There is strong evidence, in detailed context analyses, for the embeddedness of the main programmes under the RSP, and this confirms the strategy's clear focus on the development needs of the sub-regions and individual countries. All programming documents include some kind of a needs analysis, but these vary in terms of depth and detail. Among the most comprehensive ones are the respective analyses in *ECAP III*, *SWITCH*, *FLEGT* and *Erasmus Mundus*. All four could be considered best practice as they are very detailed in their elaboration of the sector-specific framework conditions, problems and challenges. *AUP* Action Fiches were also found to be of very high quality, with needs and challenges well analysed. The typical section covers historical and political context, complementary actions, and donor co-ordination issues. The NGOs and international agencies (including UNHCR) responsible for implementing *AUP* programmes all have high levels of expertise and long-standing experience in the area. (*Indicator 711*)

The RSP, MTR, programme documents and interviews provide evidence that lessons-learnt have been taken into account by the RSP in general and individual programmes and projects. Lessons learned from preceding strategies, and particularly the recommendations of past evaluations, are customarily referred to in the action fiches of individual interventions – including, but not limited to, *SAARC Civil Aviation, Phase 2*; *ECAP III*, *READI*, *ASEM IV* and *AUP*. (*Indicator 713*)

Overall, there is no lack of effort on the part of the EU to make sure that the strategy responds well to the Asian partners' needs, agendas and priorities. However, this alone does not imply the partners' prominent participation in the process of strategy development, or that mechanisms exist that would allow for the co-ordination of EU and partner strategies. In fact, no evidence emerged for the *direct* involvement of Asian partners in the design of the RSP. As illustrated in the figure below, of the 13 EUDs surveyed for this evaluation, only four stated that there were functioning dialogue mechanisms in place between the EU and the respective national government with regard to the design and implementation of the regional strategy – for example, due to too formalised and bureaucratic dialogue processes, the dependence of dialogues on project partners, or the non-existence of such mechanisms altogether.

Figure 19 *EUD survey results: Dialogue mechanisms between EU and the government of the EUD country*



Source: *EUD survey*

However, some evaluation reports elaborate on the participation of Asian stakeholders in the design of individual programmes under the RSP. For example, the *ASEM Dialogue Facility* promotes and encourages initiatives put forward by Asian members of ASEM, “*thereby giving greater ownership of the Facility to the Asian partners to address their needs*”. Human Rights, Justice and Peace-Building are particularly mentioned in this context (ASEM DF MTE, p. 38). The TRA Evaluation, 2013, describes TRA to ASEAN as being strongly aligned to the organisation's policies and priorities, and driven by ASEAN itself. Similar findings apply to TEIN, which is also characterised by a strong focus on the in-

terests and inputs of the participating Asian stakeholders in the process of developing the programme over time. On the problem of uprooted people, projects and programmes have been participatory, but field mission findings strongly suggest that ASEAN does not have, nor can be expected to have, a coherent policy towards uprooting. The field mission reveals frequent bilateral political dialogue between the EU and governments on issues of uprooted people, but, in general, this dialogue is not easy because the two sides use different vocabularies and have differing views. While the documentation for the *Erasmus Mundus* programme provides no indication that Asian partners have been involved in the design of the programme, EM features a high degree of participation of Asian HEIs in the design and implementation of teaching and exchange programmes funded by the programme. (*Indicator 712 and 715*)

Finally, the RSP's alignment with the strategic objectives of Asian partners – and, ultimately, the question of to what extent interventions have been demand-driven – is also dependent on the extent to which such partner strategies actually exist. Among the EU-supported regional organisations, ASEAN has the clearest and most comprehensive development strategy, which finds its expression in three blueprints constituting the basis for the implementation of the ASEAN Community 2015. By comparison, SAARC's strategic objectives are vague and significantly less comprehensive. In view of ASEAN's well-articulated strategic goals, the EU has found it relatively easy and straightforward to align regional-level support with the objectives of the ASEAN Community 2015 and to related sector action plans. All relevant evaluations – including, for example, *ECAP III*, *APRIS II*, TRA and EU ASEAN strategy – confirm that interventions were largely demand-driven.

No such finding is evident in the case of SAARC. SAARC's lack of clearly formulated strategies, and/or the member states' lukewarm commitment to achieving the agreed objectives, is a definite hurdle in the process of framing EU interventions. The lack of strategy at the level of regional organisations (and also at country level) is clear in the case of uprooted people. However, in other cases the evaluation disagrees with earlier assessments. While both the MTE of the ASEM DF and the ASEF Evaluation were critical of the correspondence of EU support with the strategic objectives of Asian stakeholders, and the general level of Asian ownership, interviews – especially with regard to ASEF – demonstrate a growing Asian input into ASEF agenda setting and into the design and implementation of individual projects. This has also translated into increased funding for ASEF from Asian members, particularly China. (*Indicator 714*)

4.7.2 JC 72: Degree to which regional level strategies are coherent with the overall EU policy and implementation framework

We assess coherence of the RSP and individual programmes with EU policies with regard to thematic programmes under DCI, other financing instruments (especially EIDHR and IfS) and generally EU policies in the areas of trade, environment, higher education, migration and health..

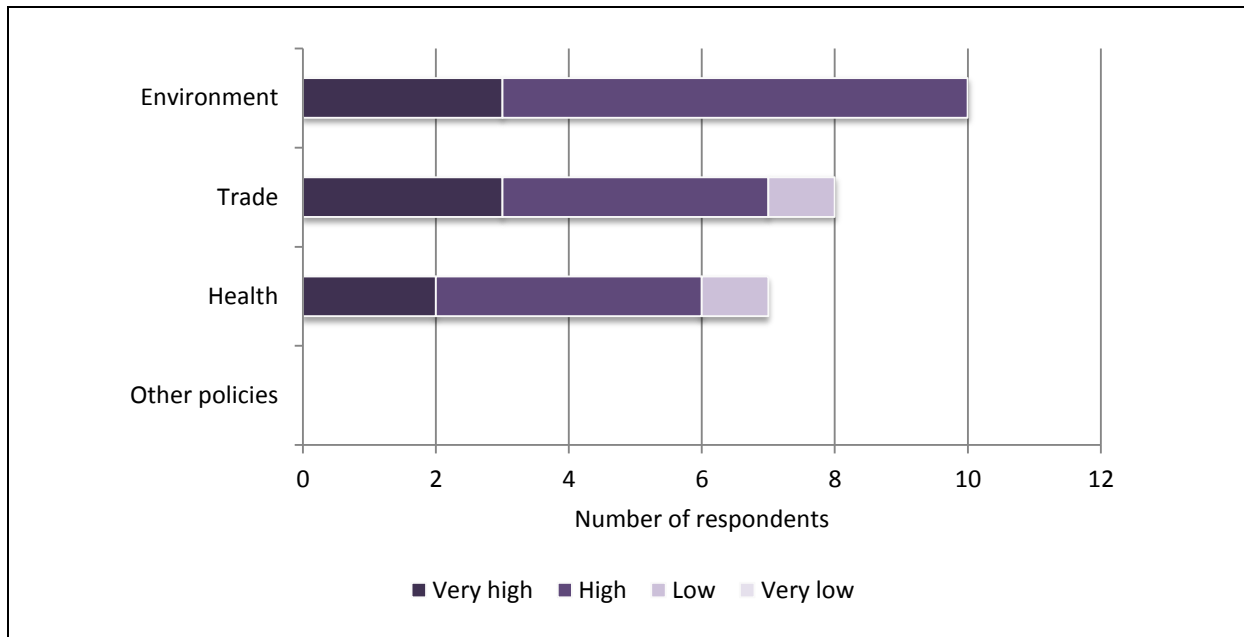
Neither documents nor stakeholder interviews revealed any incoherence between the RSP and individual programme strategies on the one hand and EU policies, DCI and financing instruments on the other. This evaluation found the most explicit reference to coherence in the case of EU policies. Evaluation reports leave no doubt that regional-level EU support is generally characterised by a high level of consistency with EU policies. For example:

- The design of the EU Trade Related Assistance (TRA) for ASEAN is coherent and consistent with the Commission's TRA objectives and key development and trade-related policies.
- *SWITCH-Asia* promotes the uptake of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) practices and policies, and is strongly supported by EU and MS policies. Most MS have SCP or resource-efficiency programmes that fit into EU strategies and policies. Resource efficiency is now a key priority for policymakers across Europe. The EU-designated resource efficiency is one of seven flagship initiatives in its Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.
- There is a high degree of congruence between *Erasmus Mundus* and other EU policy interventions in Higher Education.
- EU global health policy contains two overlapping dimensions. The first is the MDG-related fight against diseases of poverty, with specific focus on improving maternal, new-born and child health, fighting infant and child mortality, reducing the toll of diarrhoeal disease by the provision of clean water and basic sanitation, and the fight against the three focus diseases HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. All Asia regional health programmes have been consistent with these goals, as have bilateral health programmes and the contributions of thematic programmes.

- *AUP support* was entirely consistent with the EU’s overall poverty and vulnerability focus, and with sector policies in areas such as health, environment and gender. However, a difficulty noted was that while *AUP* is housed under the regional programme, there is, at least in the case of ASEAN, no effective regional dialogue. Even when problems have a distinctly regional dimension (e.g. the Rohingya crisis) it is difficult to bring the affected countries together in discussion. As a result, *AUP* remains largely a traditional LRRD programme, not one advancing bold regional solutions. (*Indicator 723*)

Likewise, the EUD survey confirms a high level of coherence between regional programmes under the RSP and EU policies in the fields of environment, trade and health.

Figure 20 *EUD survey results: Level of coherence between regional-level EU support in the respective Asian country and other EU policies*



Source: EUD survey

Such explicit evidence is harder to come by for the RSP’s coherence with thematic programmes under DCI. Comparing the RSP’s objectives and programmatic focal points with the strategic goals of thematic programmes shows clear overlaps. However, coherence between regional and thematic strategies is rarely addressed by the EU stakeholders themselves or in independent evaluations. The vast majority of programme and project documentations and evaluation reports refer only to coherence between and among different regional programmes and/or regional and national-level programmes (for example, the evaluations of *ECAP III* and *APRIS II*), but say nothing about the coherence of the interventions with thematic programmes.

The box below provides an overview of the thematic programmes and instruments, and their links with the RSP.

Box 7 *Links between Thematic Programmes and Instruments and the RSP*

The thematic programmes under DCI, which are implemented using a horizontal approach, focus on: protecting human rights; promoting democracy; eradicating poverty; self-sufficiency in food production; education; and environmental and health-related projects. Thematic programmes are supported by national and regional co-operation programmes drawn up by the EU. Each thematic programme is regulated on the basis of a decision made by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU, which specify the priorities and funding for a period of two or three years.

More specifically, the thematic programmes under DCI comprise of:

- The thematic programme for “*Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy*” (ENRTP), which helps partners to address environmental and natural resource management issues. It also helps them to meet their obligations under multi-lateral environmental agreements, and to take international policy leadership in such areas

as fighting climate change, tackling land degradation and desertification, biodiversity protection, and proper management of chemicals and wastes. The ENRTP also funds the global FLEGT Facility.

- The programme on “*Non-state actors and local authorities in development*” aims to encourage non-state actors and local authorities to get more involved in development issues.
- The Food Security Thematic Programme (FSTP) aims to improve food security in favour of the poorest and the most vulnerable, under a medium-term and longer-term perspective, and to lead to sustainable solutions.
- The “*Migration and asylum thematic programme*” supports third countries in their efforts to ensure better management of migratory flows in all their dimensions. The programme is the successor to the 2004-2006 AENEAS programme.
- “*Investing in People*” aims to support actions in the area of human and social development, in particular: education, health, gender equality, social cohesion, employment, childhood and youth, as well as culture. The programme covers nearly all the MDGs.

In addition to DCI, the following two instruments interact most prominently with the RSP:

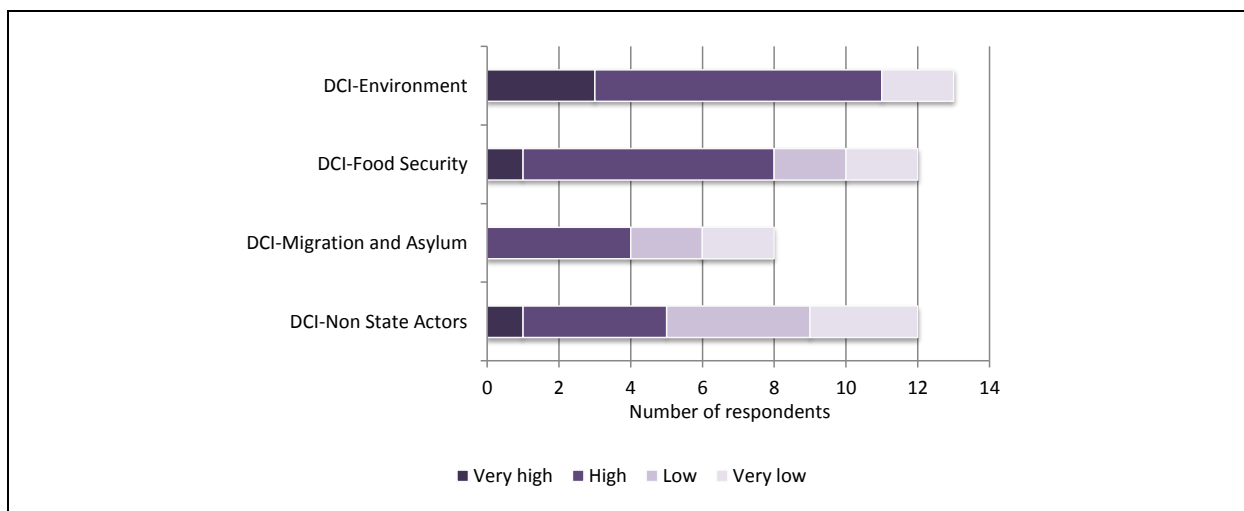
- European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights (EIDHR): Launched in 2006, EIDHR replaced and builds upon the European Initiative (2000-2006). Its aim is to provide support for the promotion of democracy and human rights in non-EU countries.
- The Instrument for Stability (IfS), which is the EU’s main thematic tool relating to security in partner countries that are undergoing crisis or where crisis is imminent. IfS has two components: one short-term for crisis situations, and the other long-term for stable situations, which means that external co-operation policies may be implemented.

The coherence criterion also concerns the linkages between EU development co-operation and the overall policy framework. The Consolidated Version of the Treaty of the European Union calls for consistency between the different areas of the EU external action, and between these and its other policies (Art. 21). In line with the general OECD definition, policy coherence in EU development co-operation is understood as a process that ensures that the objectives and results of the EU’s development policies are not undermined by other EU policies that impact on partner countries, and that these other policies support development objectives, where feasible. Hence, this question focuses on two levels of analysis.

Source: EU, http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/dci_en.htm;
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/eidhr_en.htm; http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/ifs_en.htm

In some instances – as also confirmed in interviews - links between DCI-financed programmes and the RSP were stronger than appears explicit on a reading of the RSP itself. In this context, the EUD survey suggests that RSP coherence is strongest with ENRTP, followed by FSTP.

Figure 21 *EUD survey results: Level of coherence between the programmes implemented under the current RSP and the different thematic programmes*



Source: EUD survey

Coherence could also be found with regard to AUP. Under the Asia Regional Strategy 2007-13, *AUP* serves an important function as the main vehicle to support LRRD in situations where proper dialogue may be difficult. *AUP* was clearly vital to the 27 October 2009 Council Conclusions and Action Plan on Strengthening EU Action in Afghanistan and Pakistan – although the document did not make any reference to uprooting or refugees. Links between *AUP* and the MDGs are clear in fighting extreme poverty – especially in the provision of basic services in health and education (*AUP* is the main provider in many focused settings) and, through its income generation, livelihoods and nutrition components.

Since the objectives of DCI thematic programmes are very widely cast – embracing health, education, gender equality, employment and social cohesion, culture, and youth and children – coherence between the RSP and thematic problems is easily achievable. The factors influencing poverty are perceived as being so varied – extending from local factors to regional and international factors – that they allow for practically any broadening of the scope of issues that can be addressed within DCI. Against this backdrop, the MTE of the ASEM DF, for instance, concludes: “*There is little difficulty in arguing that the initiatives of the ASEM Dialogue Facility can be located fairly within the scope of the regulation*” (p. 7). The same applies to other regional-level interventions under the RSP. (*Indicator 721*)

Essentially, the same findings apply to the coherence between the regional strategy and financing instruments other than DCI. Five out of 11 Delegations that answered the related survey question stated that there is a high level of coherence between EIDHR and IfS with the RSP. The remaining EUDs thought that coherence was low or very low, or that these instruments were not relevant for their respective countries. While there is no reason to believe that the RSP has been incoherent with these financing instruments, coherence issues were found usually to be neglected in monitoring and evaluation reports, and, in most cases, programme and project documents fail to elaborate on coherence.

For example, despite the striking similarities in the thematic focal points of EIDHR, *READI* and the *AESEM DF*, project documentation or progress/evaluation reports of neither *READI* nor the *AESEM DF* mention potential coherence with EIDHR. Likewise, the EIDHR Strategy Paper documents do not include any references to regional programmes or ASEAN, SAARC, ASEM and ASEF as regional stakeholders.

Table 13 Comparison between thematic priorities of EIDHR, *READI* and ASEM Dialogue Facility

EIDHR	READI	ASEM Dialogue Facility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in countries and regions where they are most at risk. • Strengthening the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform, in supporting the peaceful conciliation of group interests, and in consolidating political participation and representation. • Supporting actions in areas covered by EU Guidelines: dialogue on Human rights, human rights defenders, the death penalty, torture, children and armed conflicts, and violence against women. • Supporting and strengthening the international and regional framework for the protection of human rights, justice, the rule of law and the promotion of democracy. • Building confidence in, and enhancing the reliability and transparency of, democratic electoral processes, in particular through monitoring electoral processes. 	<p>Cross-cutting issues that will be elements featuring in <i>READI</i> technical dialogue and subsequent activities and be incorporated in the activities of the project. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good economic governance. • Gender impact. • Sustainable development. • Good governance. • Human rights. • Rule of law. 	<p>Subjects covered have extended from the initial emphasis on economic co-operation to include :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights. • Rule of law. • Global health threats. • Sustainable development. • Intercultural and interfaith dialogues.

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/eidhr_en.htm; *READI Action Fiche*, p. 6; *ASEM DF MTE*, p. 7)

If coherence is addressed, it is usually done in the context of synergies. For example, the Action Fiche of the EU-ASEAN Migration and Border Management Programme mentions that “*other projects supported by thematic budget lines (EIDHR, AENEAS etc...) should be asked to regularly inform the pro-*

posed programme management team to ensure synergy.” However, neither monitoring/evaluation reports nor other documents elaborate on coherence. The most detailed discussion of coherence is found with regard to national-level programmes, often in the context of synergies. (*Indicator 722*) One element of taking greater stock of labour migration in the RSP could be improved co-ordination with the DCI-financed migration and asylum budget line, which not only seeks to improve migration management but also to ensure good international practice in dealing with asylum seekers and people in irregular situations. The latter would suggest some need for co-ordination with AUP, as well elsewhere.

4.8 EQ8 on added value of the regional approach

EQ8: To what extent did the EU regional-level support add value to - and complement – its own bilateral co-operation and support of EU Member States?

The EU defines added value as “*the extent to which the development intervention adds benefits to what would have resulted from Member States’ interventions only*”. This aspect is “*closely related to the principle of subsidiarity and relates to the extra-benefit the activity/operation generates due to the fact that it was financed/implemented through the EC*.”³⁴

The EQ addresses the comparative advantage and value of operating within a regional framework, as opposed to bilateral aid. Related questions are: Did the EU operate at the right level? What are the links between regional and national areas of intervention? Did the EU mobilise the necessary resources? To what extent has the EU-regional level support complemented the interventions of EU Member States, and thereby added value to the overall EU approach towards Asia?

However, the EQ goes beyond an assessment of EU-Member States relations in the design and implementation of interventions; it also looks at the efficiency and effectiveness of the regional versus bilateral approach within the portfolio of Commission-funded programmes. As confirmed by the 2010 MTR/MIP, the EU and its Member States are committed to making European aid to Asia more effective, particularly through better co-ordination in situ, and ensuring it complements other development support and work in the beneficiary countries and regions.

Thus, the EQ addresses the external coherence and complementarity of EU interventions, and assesses to what extent regional-level EU support has been co-ordinated and has achieved synergies with the interventions of EU MS and other donors.

As dialogue and co-ordination should not be confined to programme preparation, the EQ also provides information regarding ongoing dialogue and the co-ordination efforts that are necessary for monitoring implementation progress and for taking corrective action.

Overall, the question provides information on the EU’s added value due to regional-level EU support in relation to the benefits that would have resulted from EU MS interventions, or to national-level support only. The assessment is based on relevant findings under the other EQs, the analysis of previous evaluation reports and other documents, as well as interviews with EU officials and representatives of EU MS, other donors and partner governments in all nine countries selected for the field phase.

EQ8 – Overall assessment

EU regional-level support and interventions within bilateral co-operation contexts cross-fertilise each other. In a similar vein, there is no doubt about the existence of well-functioning communication channels and co-ordination mechanisms between the EU, EU MS and other donors to maximise the value added stemming from programmes under the Regional Strategy for Asia. Evaluation reports and stakeholder interviews confirm the existence of complementarity and synergies between different levels and approaches within the overall framework of EU development co-operation with Asia.

It is evident, though, that the EU has put little effort into outlining and discussing linkages between regional and national programmes in strategic and programming documents. Regional programmes usually do not provide much information on potential links with national interventions, while CSPs give little reference, if any, to the RSP or regional-level programmes.

Evidence for the value added of the regional approach has mainly emerged in interviews. For example, although the *Erasmus Mundus* programme is a global programme, managed centrally from Europe, it contains a strong regional dimension that is highly valued by Asian higher education stakeholders. On the other hand, *AUP*, which is based on calls for proposals, has not succeeded in becom-

³⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/evaluation/methodology/methods/mth_ccr_en.htm.

EQ8 – Overall assessment

ing a programme that is truly regional in spirit, and the rationale for placing it under the Asia regional programme may simply be that it is expected to be active in many countries, implementing projects with a broadly similar LRRD orientation.

The designs of regional projects tend to be optimistic with regard to the synergies – and related value added – they can create in collaboration with other regional interventions and bilateral projects. However, such objectives are rarely fully achieved during implementation and, in some cases, interviews revealed that EU-funded projects operating in similar areas did not know of each other's existence. This, for example, is the case for *READI* and the Singapore-based EU-Asia Dialogue project, which both have had a strong focus on food security. While it is neither necessary nor practical for all related EU-funded interventions to constantly interact with each other, some level of mutual awareness to avoid duplication of activities should be taken for granted.

Overall, the programmes under the Asia Strategy have added value to - and complemented – the support of EU MS to some extent. However, except in the case of ASEAN, where co-ordination between EU-funded and German-funded interventions already took place in the design phase, this was not achieved as the result of a strategic approach but more due to co-ordination at the implementation stage, which takes place in all countries.

4.8.1 JC 81: Regional-level interventions in the various sectors are designed and implemented so as to maximise the value added stemming from a regional approach

Design and implementation of EU interventions do not follow an approach that tries to systematically maximise the advantages and benefits that regional level programmes potentially offer, as opposed to a strategy that would solely focus on the national level.

Regional-level programmes (e.g., *APRIS*, *ECAP* or *TEIN*) take the regional approach for granted and do not usually elaborate on the specific value added of regional programmes. Some programme and project documents implicitly suggest that the regional approach is the most efficient and effective one – particularly in cases when a regional organisation, such as ASEAN, is the partner – but no explicit references to the specific value added of the regional approach are made. Based on findings during the desk and field phase, there is evidence that the HE interventions at regional level added considerable value. Although the *Erasmus Mundus* programme is a global programme managed centrally from Europe, it contains a strong regional dimension that is highly valued by Asian HE actors.

The lack of elaboration on the value added of regional approaches in most programme documents does not necessarily imply the actual absence of such value added. For example, *SWITCH-Asia* has a large added value to other EU programmes, and was found to be complementary to thematic programmes (such as ENRTP). However, environment is rarely presented as a key sector in the CSPs, and the focus on working with the private sector (e.g. SMEs) is not an option in bilateral programmes. This feature is also not present in thematic programmes. In general, regional added value is mostly found in the Policy Support Component implemented by UNEP, and in grant projects that are implemented in several countries and/or by agencies under ASEAN (e.g., the Energy Manager Scheme).

The country strategies, of which 18 were analysed for this report, do not provide much information. There is no explicit discussion of the added value of a regional approach in any of the CSPs, either with regard to the overall level or to the level of a specific sector. When the CSPs mention issues that are going to be addressed by regional (or thematic, for that matter) programmes, the funding source is stated matter of fact (e.g. *Erasmus Mundus* for higher education). In other words, regional programmes are presented simply as an additional funding source, and not as a qualitatively different approach. Only the CSP for Afghanistan, which explicitly states the need for a regional approach to the co-operation, is an exception in this regard. While MTRs are more likely to refer to specific regional and thematic programmes, the RSP is mentioned only in four out of the 13 MTRs, and only the MTR of Bangladesh provides a relatively detailed reference to the RSP and its rationale. (*Indicator 811*)

The picture does not change significantly when the question is asked if the regional level was the most appropriate level. Obviously, the appropriateness of intervening at the regional level is self-evident in several cases. By definition and default, programmes in support of regional economic integration, for example, have to operate at the regional level. The assessment of appropriateness is more relevant for programmes that could potentially operate either as regional or national interventions, but where a decision has been made to implement them with a regional focus in mind. There is evidence that key interventions in this regard – such as *FLEGT-Asia*, and *EU support for cross-border animal and human health* – have been especially successful as a result of their regional focus. Indeed, given the re-

gional dimension of the respective problems and challenges they address, a pure national-level approach would not have done justice to the complexity of the issues at stake. The survey of the EUDs shows that regional-level co-operation is most commonly managed in the area of environment, energy and climate change. Ten out of 13 Delegations were involved in the management or supervision of regional programmes in this field.

On the other hand, *AUP*, while implemented at the regional level, has never managed to assume a strong regional dimension, apart from its strategic orientation towards crisis nexuses, such as Afghanistan-Pakistan and Thailand-Myanmar-Bangladesh. Thus, although strategic assessments of problems such as the Rohingya crisis are available, there is no scope for regional political dialogue at ASEAN. The regional dimension was better taken into account in political dialogue and donor consultations in Afghanistan-Pakistan. (*Indicator 812 and 813*)

4.8.2 JC 82: Regional-level EU interventions complement and add value to the EU interventions carried out at the bilateral level

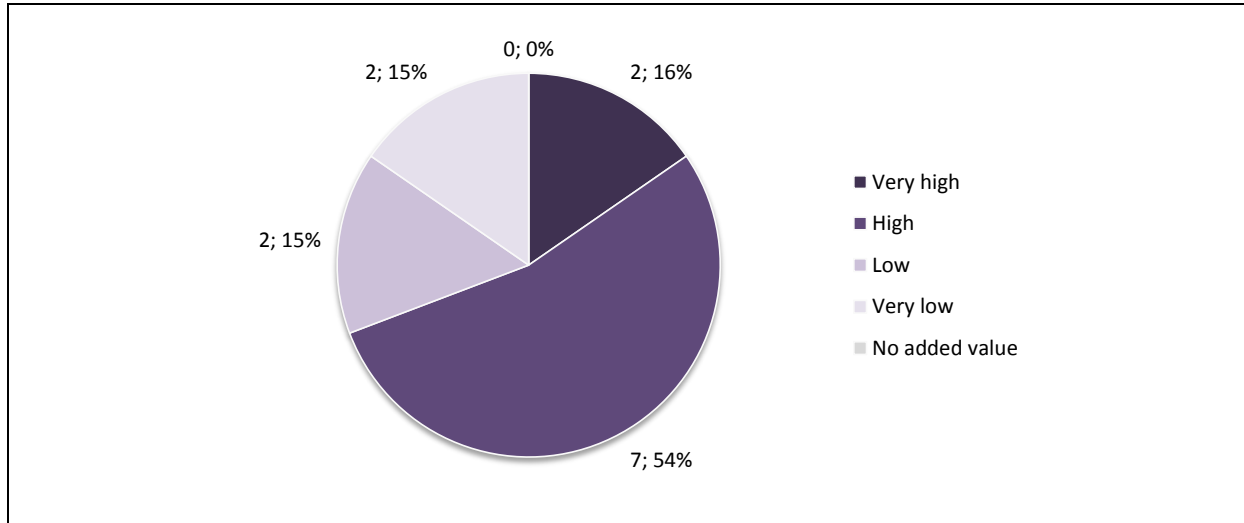
While there is substantial evidence that regional-level interventions have complemented support provided as part of bilateral co-operation, the EU has not made much effort to outline and present such complementarities and synergies between different levels of intervention.

References to synergies and cross-references between regional and bilateral programming levels are usually made only in passing, if at all. *ECAP III* is one of the few major programmes that elaborates in detail on potential linkages between various regional and bilateral programmes, funded by the EU itself or other donors. There is no reference to the RSP – and hence to opportunities for synergies between regional and national-level interventions – in any country strategy. However, this is likely to be due to the parallel drafting period of RSP and CSP. The CSP for Mongolia, for example, was finalised at the end of February 2007, while most of the others were finalised between April and June 2007. The RSP was finalised (1st Revision) by 31 May 2007 – after the completion of the CSP. Even in the sections dedicated to “*objectives of the EU as laid down in other applicable documents*” (generally available in the Annex), the RSP is not mentioned at all. The latest documents on EU-Asia relations mentioned in these sections are the EU-Asia communication of 2001 and the “*New Partnership with South-East Asia*” communication of 2003. Furthermore, in the CSPs main section on the EU response strategy, there is generally little or no reference to regional programmes beyond limited standard phrases – for example, on *Erasmus Mundus*. Most CSPs contain a section on “*Thematic and Regional Programmes*”, but that focuses mostly on thematic programmes and instruments, such as EIDHR, and NSA in Development. This all points to a lack of effort to think about strong and beneficial linkages between regional and bilateral programmes in a strategic manner. While complementarities and synergies are not well elaborated on in strategy documents, they are normally the focus of country strategy evaluations. Evidence is mixed, ranging from “*The EC did not succeed in achieving a strategic response through Regional programmes*” (Malaysia) to a positive assessment of the synergies between thematic, regional and bilateral approaches achieved in Thailand. (*Indicator 821*)

However, as the graph below illustrates, almost two-thirds of the 13 respondents see a high (in the case of seven EUDs) or even very high (two EUDs) comparative advantage of operating within a regional framework, as opposed to bilateral aid. While 30% (four EUDs) describe it as low or very low, none of the respondents perceive it as having no added value at all.

Respondents who perceive only a low or very low added value state that very often, regional programmes target issues that are not tailored enough to a specific country’s needs or are not relevant altogether. In contrast, EUDs rating the regional added value as high or very high state that they perceive a clear comparative advantage. For most, the added value depends on the actual policies and programmes that are implemented, and an advantage of the regional approach is especially seen with regard to trans-border issues.

Figure 22 EUD survey results: Added value of regional framework vs. bilateral aid



Source: EUD Survey

Documents and stakeholder interviews provide evidence that efforts for the creation of complementarities and synergies between regional and national interventions – based on formal or informal mechanisms and communication channels – have increased, mainly as the result of lessons learned from previous programmes and projects. Some EAMRs elaborate on such co-ordination mechanisms and tend to provide a balanced assessment. For example, in the case of Vietnam, the design of the EU Multilateral Trade Project (MUTRAP) and the Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism (ESRT) capacity development programme reinforces “*the efforts to support regional integration through the ASEAN projects*”, but “*efforts to ensure complementarity represent a challenge where regional and thematic programmes cover areas or sectors outside the scope of national projects*” (EAMR 12/2012). Past evaluations have regularly found deficiencies with regard to co-ordination. However, not all findings still hold true. While the TRA Evaluation 2013 identified a lack of co-ordination of EU interventions that are targeted at regional and national levels, interviews showed that this finding no longer applies to new interventions, such as *ARISE* and (on non-trade matters) *READI*, which have actively sought and managed to interact with bilateral interventions in key sectors.

At the same time, project action fiches are regularly over-optimistic when outlining the potential for the creation of synergies. For example, according to the *SAARC Civil Aviation Action Fiche*, it was envisioned that the project would achieve synergies with other donor-funded and EU-funded projects in Asia – notably the EU-India project, but also the EU-China and EU-South East Asia projects, and half a dozen other interventions. However, these objectives could not be achieved due to the project’s premature termination. It would have been the first project actually to establish collaboration between regional-level interventions in SAARC and ASEAN. In a similar vein, the *READI* Action Fiche stresses: “*Whenever possible, synergies and complementarities will be sought within the context of the EU’s regional programmes in Asia, those under the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the EU’s bilateral programmes in Asia, notably those taking place under individual Country Strategy Paper (CSP) and National Indicative Programmes (NIP).*” While interviews confirmed that collaboration with other projects was actively and successfully promoted in co-operation areas such as disaster preparedness and management, no exchange has taken place under the ASEM umbrella, and especially with ASEF, which focuses on similar co-operation agendas or other programmes designed to strengthen EU-Asia relations. For instance, there has been no interaction between *READI* and the *EU-Asia Dialogue*, based in Singapore, although both have addressed food security as a key focal point. In fact, interviews revealed that *READI* and the *EU-Asia Dialogue* did not know of each other’s existence. (*Indicator 822 and 823*)

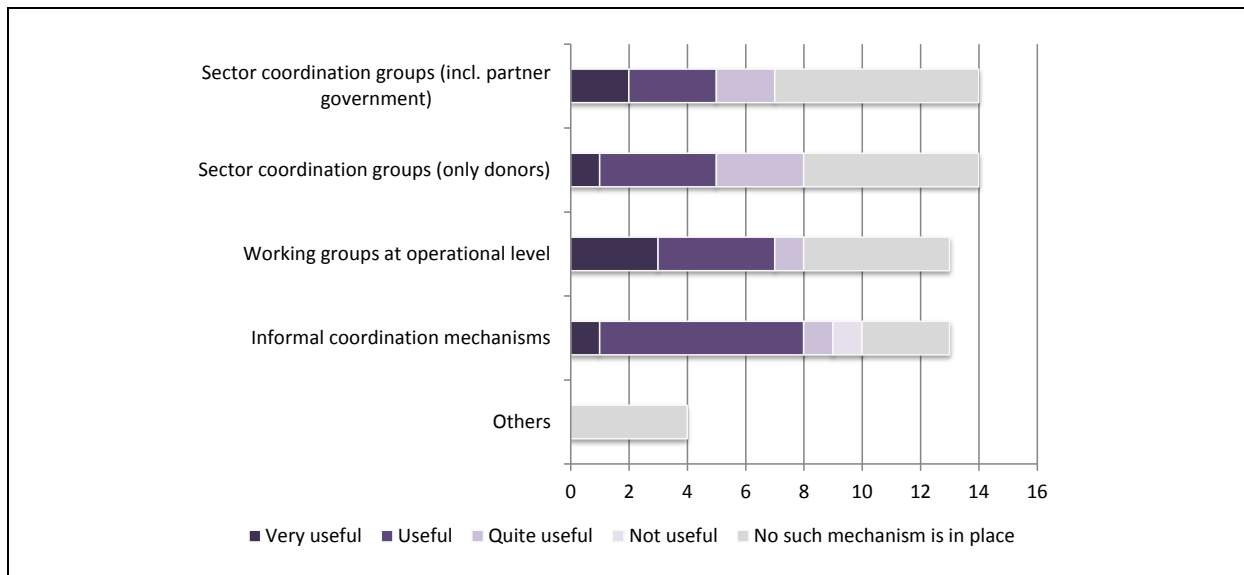
4.8.3 JC 83: Degree to which regional-level EU support has been designed and implemented so as to complement and add value to relevant EU MS and other donors

The EU’s regional programming documents do not customary make specific references to other donors’ interventions, let alone discuss areas of overlap or potentials for collaboration. Yet, as some programmes, such as *AUP*, operate on a call for proposals basis, it would be unrealistic to expect project-by-project consultation with other partners. However, to judge by Thailand and Myanmar for example,

the pool of implementing partners and active agencies is fairly small and informal communications are good. Regional animal and human health interventions is almost by definition complementary to MS interventions because they are explicitly grounded in and designed with regard to the public good problem. As found in the recent thematic evaluation on health, EU Delegations have generally been very active in MS co-ordination, but this appears to be mostly in the context of bilateral co-ordination, rather than co-ordination of regional interventions. Overall, neither documents nor interviews provide proof that regional-level support has been designed and implemented with the specific objective of complementing and adding value to the interventions of EU MS and other donors. There is, however, evidence for functioning coordination mechanism in relations between the EU and EU MS and other donors respectively. The EAMR for basically all countries covered by this evaluation, confirmed by interviews, stress the existence of such modalities at implementation stage. At the same time, approaches to coordination differ significantly across the region and depend on the structural framework conditions in the respective partner countries. (*Indicator 831 and 832*)

The EUD survey shows that formal and/or informal exchange mechanisms exist in the majority of cases and are considered useful.

Figure 23 EUD survey results: Exchange mechanisms between EU, other donors (incl. EU MS) and the government of the EUD country



Source: EUD Survey

The most comprehensive example for EU-MS co-ordination and an explicit approach to the strengthening of complementarities and synergies is the support to the ASEAN Secretariat. The TRA Evaluation and stakeholder interviews found clear evidence for synergies (and complementarity) between the EU projects (mainly *APRIS* and the *EU-ASEAN Statistical Capacity Building Programme/EASCBP*) and two GIZ-implemented interventions at the ASEC, funded by Germany. Generally GIZ concentrates on issues that are not (fully) covered by the EU projects, e.g. competition policy. Synergies particularly exist with regard to ASEAN's Research Information & Statistical Division (ASEANStats), funded mainly by the EU (*EASCBP*), and the related ASEAN Integration Monitoring Office (AIMO), which is supported to large extents through the GIZ capacity building project. ASEANStats, the statistical service of ASEAN modelled on EUROSTAT (as a much smaller version though), focuses on the development of regional indicators, data frameworks and systems for monitoring ASEAN Community goals and initiatives and more specifically the compilation, consolidation, dissemination and communication of statistical information about ASEAN and its Member States (Vol 2, p. 61). (*Indicator 832*)

Formal mechanisms for joint financing are not yet in place with the exception of ASEF which is based on complementary actions. Support to ASEF has typically been planned at around EUR 1 million per year which is sufficient to finance around 20-25% of the budgeted expenditure of ASEF, with other events being financed by other ASEM partners. Other large contributors to ASEF by EU MS include Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, and Luxembourg (ASEM IV Action Fiche, p. 5). (*Indicator 833*)

5 Conclusions

For analytical clarity, we have grouped the conclusions into two clusters:

- Relevance, strategic focus and co-ordination: conclusions 1, 2, 3 & 4
- Outcomes: conclusions 5, 6 & 7

5.1 Relevance, strategic focus and co-ordination

5.1.1 Conclusion 1: Overall relevance of the EU-Asia Strategy

While the vast majority of individual programmes and projects under the RSP have been highly relevant to the needs of Asian partners, the strategy as a whole failed to develop a coherent regional approach.

This conclusion is based on EQs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

The vast majority of individual programmes and projects, which have been implemented under the RSP, are highly relevant as they have addressed key development challenges and clearly responded to the needs of Asian partners. There is also little doubt that regional-level programmes have complemented and strengthened national programmes, and thereby increased the relevance of the EU-Asia development co-operation portfolio as a whole. This applies across all thematic sectors of the strategy. The evaluation looked in detail at hundreds of individual interventions, and relevance emerged as a problematic issue in only a very small number of cases. At the same time, it is reasonable to conclude that most regional interventions would have had the same degree of relevance without being integrated into a regional strategy. A clear example is AUP, which, despite high relevance and addressing real needs, never had a truly regional dimension. The RSP subsumes all programmes that focus on, and operate in, Asia. First and foremost, uniting these interventions under one regional strategy was a pragmatic decision that undoubtedly created an opportunity to upgrade EU-Asia relations from previously loosely connected individual strategies into a more coherent approach. Simply put, the relevance of the EU's relations with Asia became more visible and comprehensible and – equally importantly – increased the flexibility of re-aligning EU-Asia development co-operation with emerging needs of a regional dimension. The stronger explicit focus on the specific needs of the CLMV countries, which became more and more obvious during the later phases of the strategy, is a case in point.

However, there was little attempt to develop individual bilateral or sub-regional programmes into truly Asia-wide approaches in sectors where this could have strengthened the relevance of the strategy as a whole. For example, although ASEAN and SAARC were clustered together under the pillar *support to regional economic integration*, EU co-operation with the respective organisations continued in a separated and parallel manner, without trying to link interventions for the benefit of the partner organisations, which face similar challenges. Likewise, the AUP programme, despite the fact that many problems of uprooted people are inherently regional, has never emerged as a regionally-based or active programme. Some sub-regional aspects have been incorporated (e.g. Thailand-Myanmar and Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iran), and there is some evidence that the cross-border impacts of the Sri Lanka AUP programme on India are also recognised. However, problems of people being uprooted can quickly spread across the region, requiring a regional forum for discussion and response, and regional scope for action. While it might be easier to regard Asia as consisting of its two sub-regions in this regard, some crises of uprooting, such as the Rohingya crisis, link both ASEAN and SAARC. Where sub-regional or regional approaches are too difficult to implement (for example, between Bangladesh and Myanmar) this should not be taken as an indication that the more traditional nationally-based approaches should not be employed. Regional health programmes have encouraged the formation of regional networks and the sharing of information, but such initiatives are still in their infancy. The capacity of regional organisations remains low, but one must take into account the poor initial conditions, and the fact that this is a relatively new area of concern.

5.1.2 Conclusion 2: Level of ownership

Most interventions under the RSP are characterised by a high level of national and regional ownership, and this has contributed to the effectiveness of implementation. However, donor dependence in key co-operation areas is a matter of concern.

This conclusion is based on EQs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

As expected, the degree of ownership in the implementation of strategies varies across sectors and individual programmes, and is strongest in fields where Asian partners have developed a sense of urgency and have also built suitable capacities in addressing existing challenges. This is at least partially the case for disaster prevention and management, an area in which key stakeholders (particularly ASEAN) have taken a proactive approach. Similar conclusions can be drawn for individual AUP projects and interventions related to human and animal health. However, as the comparison between AUP and disaster management shows, the presence or absence of a shared regional view is a crucial variable. There has been productive regional co-ordination in the latter area, but little in the former. As illustrated by the case of regional-level support to SAARC, programmes struggle when regional and national ownership is lacking or is very low. Another example – but with less severe consequences – are SWITCH-Asia grant projects. The large variation in (sub-)sectors and themes addressed by the grant projects has decreased the possibility of creating synergy and a joint approach to improve the enabling policy environment. In addition, the projects are not necessarily perceived as having a high priority in the respective countries. While the correlation between the level of ownership and the effectiveness of an intervention is unsurprising, the more important finding is that such ownership deficits were not anticipated in the process of drafting the RSP.

Where a good degree of ownership exists, it is mainly in relation to the design and conceptual dimension of an intervention, but not its funding. The commitment of Asian partners to contribute financially to the implementation of programmes and projects under the RSP has been low. The field of regional economic integration is a case in point. Given the growing number of Asian countries graduating from DCI assistance, the existing donor dependence of bilateral and regional partners across all sectors of the strategy should be a concern. It is to be questioned why regional co-operation agendas – including trade-related matters, disaster management, and health, which rank high on the list of strategic priorities of many increasingly better-off Asian states – should be fully funded by external donors.

5.1.3 Conclusion 3: Stakeholder participation

The participation of non-government stakeholders in the design and especially the implementation of programmes and projects has clearly grown during the duration of the RSP, but this does not yet extend to a systematic and institutionalised involvement of civil society across all major fields of the co-operation programme.

This conclusion is based on EQs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

While some consultation with state and non-state stakeholder groups took place in the process of drafting the RSP, Asian partners did not directly participate in the design of the RSP as such. However, programmes and projects implemented under the strategy have involved a broad spectrum of stakeholders and, even more importantly, have often brought different stakeholder groups together. For example, a key feature of SWITCH-Asia is its focus on working with the private sector. The programme has thereby opened up a new target group and network for EU co-operation.

In a similar vein, in the education sector, both Erasmus Mundus and TEIN have created new and important opportunities for higher education stakeholders to contribute to mutual learning between Asia and Europe. EM remains a highly-valued tool for increasingly sophisticated strategies for internationalisation pursued by Asian HEIs towards Europe. The approach towards HE has been strengthened through the creation of communication channels between governments and civil society actors – for example, within the context of ASEM and ASEF.

In some areas, such as cross-border human and animal health, disaster management and prevention, and AUP, the strong involvement of non-state actors is mandatory to ensure the effectiveness of the approach. In these areas, and also in fields that have traditionally been the domain of government elites – above all, regional economic integration – the participation of civil society has increased in recent years. In large parts, this has been a response to monitoring and evaluation and, more specifically, to the often-highlighted need to address the lack of civil society participation in the design and implementation of projects. However, much still needs to be done in all priority areas of the strategy to

promote and ensure the systematic and institutionalised participation of non-state stakeholders, particularly in instances where these groups are also direct beneficiaries. For example, measures aimed at breaking down barriers to participation in HE for members of disadvantaged groups had less of an impact than desired. The evaluation also showed that the EU's regional-level interventions in HE are poorly equipped to address the wide range of equity issues across the region.

5.1.4 Conclusion 4: Co-ordination, coherence & complementarity

The conclusion is threefold. First, co-ordination between regional-level and bilateral interventions has substantially increased. Second, the RSP is coherent with the EU's external policies, DCI-thematic programmes and other financing instruments, but the EU has failed to place the strategy explicitly within the broader context of these instruments. Third, EU and Member States support is generally complementary, but possible synergies are underused as complementarity efforts do not extend to joint design or joint financing of interventions.

This conclusion is based on EQs 7 and 8.

First, co-ordination – but not complementarity - between regional-level and bilateral interventions was a problem and challenge, particularly during the early years of the RSP, but co-ordination has markedly improved during the later phase. This has already led to the creation of additional synergies in several cases.

Second, the programmes in all sectors of the strategy are generally coherent with the EU's external policies in the fields of education, environment, health, trade, and non-traditional security. There are no glaring mismatches. While the same general conclusion applies to the RSP's coherence with DCI-financed thematic programmes and other financing instruments, the evidence is less straightforward. Here, the main conclusion is best summarised by the finding that there are no inconsistencies or incoherencies between the RSP on the one hand and DCI thematic programmes and other instruments on the other. However, the EU could have done more to create explicit links between the strategy and the respective thematic programmes and instruments. Embedding the strategy more directly within the overall framework of thematic programmes and instruments would also have increased the RSP's relevance.

Third, EU interventions are generally complementary to the support from Member States. No cases of conflicting or contradictory approaches were found. However, while formalised co-ordination mechanisms in EU-Member States relations exist almost everywhere in Asia (and such institutionalised forums have grown in number and significance during the RSP), joint needs analyses, let alone joint financing, are still rare exceptions.

5.2 Outcomes

5.2.1 Conclusion 5: Alignment of development co-operation and policy dialogues

Development co-operation and inter-regional policy dialogues, as the two main strategic approaches towards Asia, have mutually reinforced each other and increased the EU's leverage on key agendas.

This conclusion is based on EQs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

It is a particular strength of the RSP that it is based on development co-operation and policy dialogues as mutually reinforcing pillars. The cross-linkages between the co-operation programme and institutionalised high-level political relations – for example, within the contexts of ASEM and the EU-ASEAN dialogue mechanisms, but also at the bilateral level with individual Asian governments – have increased the ability of the EU and Asian partners to respond more effectively to emerging challenges in political, economic, social and environmental fields. For example, it has been mainly due to accompanying bilateral policy dialogues that the AUP programme has succeeded in defining itself as an LRRD programme. The EU has successfully used political dialogue to encourage governments to accept LRRD measures, even when they were reluctant to do so. In a similar vein, the environmental and the education sectors, SWITCH-Asia and Erasmus Mundus have been closely intertwined with inter-regional dialogues, and have thereby increased the EU's leverage on key agendas. With regard to regional economic integration as the most visible case of this dual approach, the development partnership with ASEAN on the one hand and the EU-ASEAN dialogue relations on the other are the two sides of the same coin, and neither dimension could function well without the other. However, the same does not apply to SAARC, where failure to engage the organisation in a meaningful development programme is at least partly to be blamed on the absence of a well-established policy dialogue

setting at the inter-regional level. However, the overall conclusion on the alignment of development co-operation and policy dialogues remains positive, even though synergies have not been created to the fullest possible extent, and missed opportunities are evident in some sectors. For instance, while policy dialogues are ideally suited to supporting work in the area of international good practice and standards with regard to migrant labour, this issue has not been addressed in the context of AUP. Policy dialogue related to uprooted people has also remained mostly at the bilateral level – an opportunity missed in view of the increasingly regional level of the problems being addressed.

On a general note, the evaluation has also come across several instances of policy dialogues in which high-level Asian representation was not matched by the same degree of seniority on the EU side. This has had repercussions for EU-Asia relations.

5.2.2 Conclusion 6: EU contribution to policies and development practices

Programmes and projects implemented under the RSP have had some success in contributing to new or revised national policy frameworks and innovative practices among key stakeholders in core thematic areas, but challenges remain to deliver more tangible outcomes.

This conclusion is based on EQs 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Clear evidence for EU contribution to changed policy frameworks and practices is available in the field of regional integration – in both economic and non-economic areas – where national partners have implemented a wide range of EU-supported new legal frameworks and policies. This includes, but is not limited to, customs-related matters, intellectual property rights, the reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers, and approaches to the management of infectious diseases.

In a similar vein, FLEGT Asia has made a strong contribution towards creating awareness for, and related policy responses towards, illegal logging and related trade. In Asia, as in most other parts of the world, the concern about tropical forests, and particularly their role in mitigating climate change, is increasing. The programme clearly responds to Asian and EU needs for legal timber.

SWITCH-Asia has contributed to introducing the wide-scale application of SCP practices by companies, mainly SMEs. However, SCP is not yet mainstreamed in the respective (sub-)sectors, and many more opportunities are yet to be explored. In addition, more synergy can be generated by establishing more linkages among the components.

While both TEIN and EM have had some impact on governance practices in general, and more specifically on teaching quality and research output, these effects have been highly localised. Particularly in terms of governance practices, EU interventions have helped to shape policy deliberation about HE governance more than they have “exported” practices. There is, then, considerable scope for leveraging impacts on teaching quality and research capacity at national and HEI level. Specifically for EM, administrative, legal and institutional barriers at national and local levels dampen multiplier effects on teaching, research and HE governance. For TEIN, similar issues at the level of national HE policy-making may become barriers to the effective diffusion of regional HE innovations, such as e-learning initiatives. Furthermore, the degree of local engagement that these translation processes require sits awkwardly in regional-level programmes such as EM and TEIN.

AUP has been effective to the extent that cross-border aspects of uprooting have been dealt with by, – in some cases – previously reluctant national partners. However, there is a need for closer cross-border consultation and programme co-ordination, including rational partitioning of resources, to ensure that progress in the refugee host country is maintained while preparations for return are pursued. This is a delicate matter requiring close monitoring of government services, security, and the rule of law in the area of origin. In areas that have harboured uprooted people, it requires a realistic approach to ensure that, while disruptive changes are avoided, it is made clear that the status quo is unlikely to continue indefinitely. It also requires dialogue with host countries in relation to the future status of uprooted people who will not wish to return or who, having done so, will be discouraged by life in their region of origin and seek to re-install themselves legally in the country that previously harboured them.

5.2.3 Conclusion 7: Effectiveness of regional approaches in addressing core development needs

Regional approaches have not achieved the same level of effectively addressing core development needs – particularly with regard to socio-economic agendas – in all areas of intervention. The examples at the opposite ends of the spectrum are environment (positive) and higher education (negative). Somewhere in between is health.

This conclusion is based on EQs 3, 4 and 5.

All three regional programmes addressing the environment, energy and climate change have had a specific focus on some of the most pressing development needs related to core socio-economic challenges and needs at national and local levels. Between them, and in a complementary fashion, SWITCH-Asia (sustainable consumption and production/SCP), FLEGT-Asia (illegal logging and legal trade, Voluntary Partnership Agreement/VPA) and the AIF (blending fund for climate change) have made a direct contribution to sustainable development, the reconciliation of trade and other economic activities, and environmental protection. SCP in particular is a strong concept in greening the economy. The persistence of illegal logging directly affects the role of tropical forests in mitigating climate change, and therefore directly impacts on socio-economic issues.

On the other hand, regional-level HE programmes on their own are poorly equipped to address, let alone redress, local development needs and specific patterns of socio-economic disadvantage. In countries where national development needs are clearly defined and institutionalised in policy, the EM and TEIN programmes have contributed to country development needs. In contrast, in countries where development needs and patterns of disadvantage were not clearly defined and operationalised in policy, regional-level programmes had far less traction on development issues and patterns of disadvantage. It would seem that regional-level HE programmes are not well placed to address, and even raise awareness of, socio-economic disadvantage in other parts of society.

In health, regional co-operation has helped to strengthen networks and has contributed to capacity building, but there is agreement that capacity at ASEAN and SAARC Secretariats remains weak (especially in the latter case), and that the level of cross-border co-operation between human and animal health experts needs to be strengthened further.

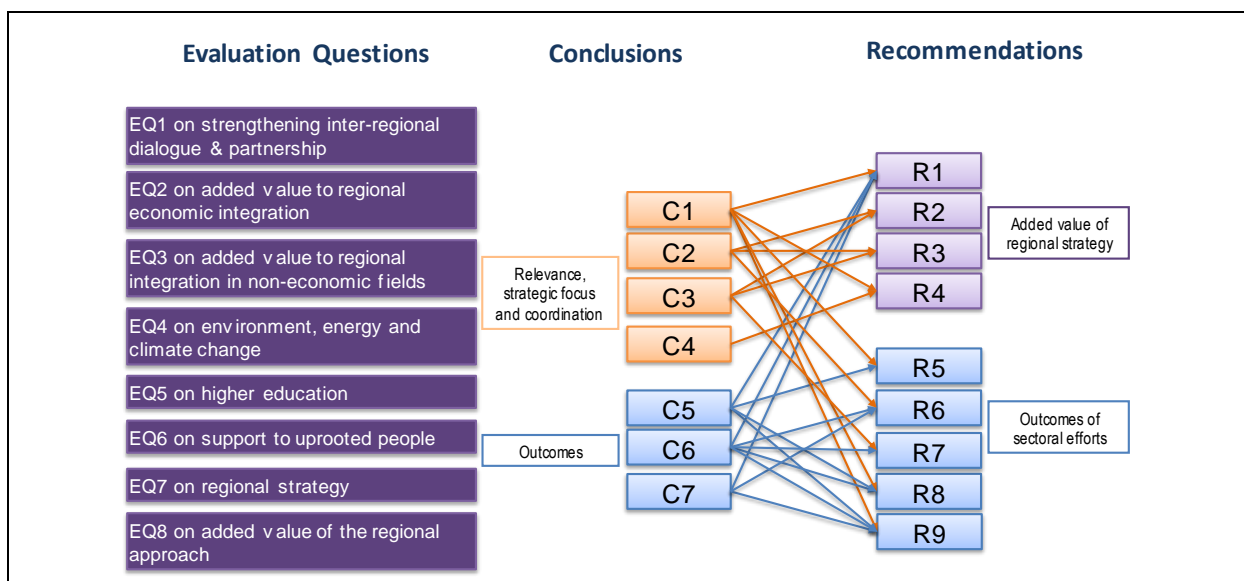
6 Recommendations

The following key recommendations emerge from the conclusions. The recommendations are presented in two clusters, namely:

- Enhancing the value added of the strategy: recommendations 1-4.
- Increasing outcomes of sectoral efforts: recommendations 5-9.

The linkages between EQs (findings), conclusions and recommendations are illustrated below.

Figure 24 Major links between EQs, conclusions and recommendations



The table below provides an overview of the level of priority in terms of importance of the recommendations and the urgency (agenda) of their realisation. This information is also provided schematically.

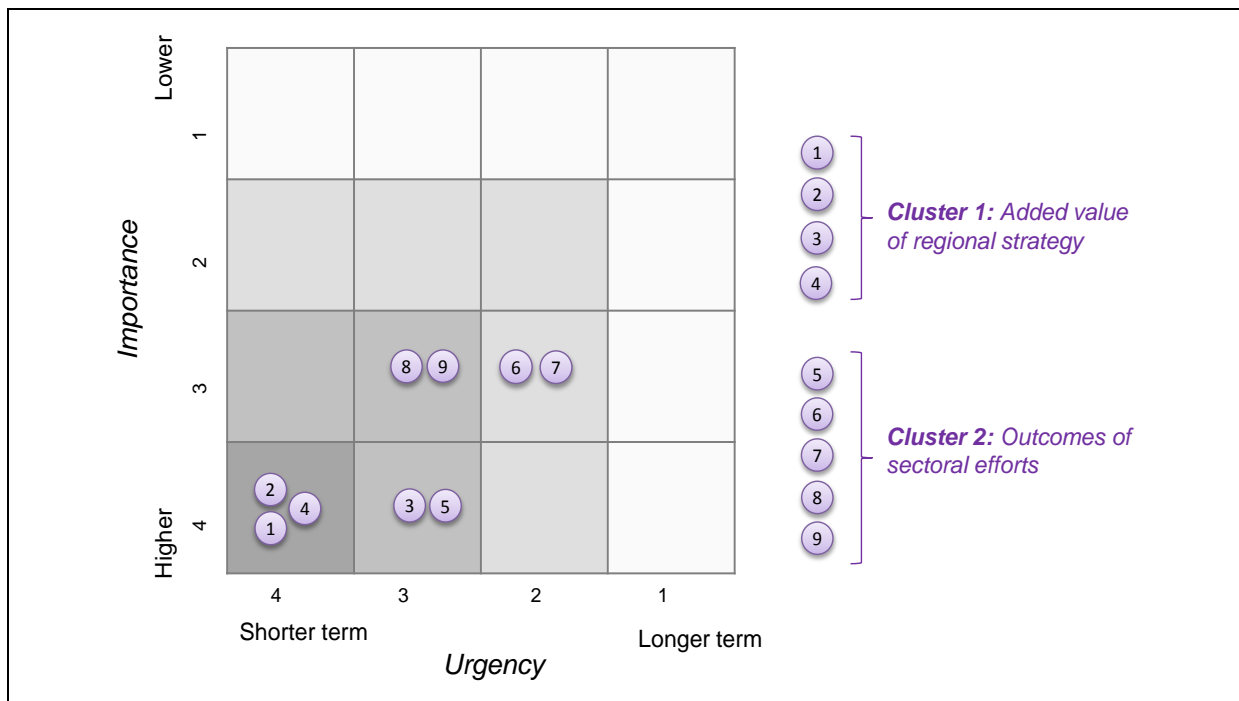
Table 14 *Prioritisation of recommendation*

No.	Issue	Importance*	Urgency*
1.	Strengthen the integration of all interventions, which are either exclusively directed towards Asia or have an Asia component, into the regional strategy.	4	4
2.	Consider expanding the direct participation of regional stakeholders in the design of the strategy and programmes under the RSP.	4	4
3.	Asian partners, particularly the governments of non-DCI countries, should be encouraged to accept financial burden-sharing for regional-level interventions that are in their own strategic or economic interest. There is a clear necessity to reduce donor dependence in this field.	4	3
4.	Consider the strengthening of synergies between the regional strategy on the one hand and thematic programmes under DCI and other financing instruments on the other.	4	4
5.	Objectives for the support of regional integration – in both economic and non-economic areas – should be based on realistic assessments of the partners' needs, interests and capacities. Regional approaches should not be followed as a matter of course where bilateral strategies offer a chance for success.	4	3
6.	Refocus the various components of SWITCH-Asia and concentrate on fewer sectors to generate more synergy and impact.	3	2
7.	Keep gateways to European HE systems open for Asian HEIs and explore ways of improving the impacts on teaching and research in Asian HEIs and of providing HE for disadvantaged groups in Asia.	3	2
8.	Raise issues of population uprooting and migration to the regional level, where solutions need to be devised.	3	3
9.	Improve co-ordination between regional health support, bilateral health systems strengthening, and the new Global Health budget line.	3	3

* 1 = low, 4 = high

The following figure depicts this assessment graphically.

Figure 25 *Prioritisation of recommendations*



6.1 Enhancing the added value of the regional strategy

6.1.1 Recommendation 1: Strengthening region-wide approaches

Strengthen the integration of all interventions, which are either exclusively directed towards Asia or have an Asia component, into the regional strategy. In this process, more thought should be given to the value added of the regional approach.

Based on conclusions 1, 5, 6 and 7.

If it is the RSP's purpose to go beyond the provision of an umbrella for individual programmes (as appears, for example, to be the case with AUP), regional challenges need to be addressed in a way that takes advantage of the entire portfolio of EU-Asia relations and addresses specifically regional aspects of challenges.

With the notable exceptions of SWITCH and FLEGT, the RSP does not, in its current design and practice, explicitly encourage the creation of cross-linkages and synergies among individual interventions for the purpose of addressing matters of a regional dimension from Asia-wide perspectives. While not all thematic areas call for approaches focusing on the entire region, it is necessary to look beyond the boundaries of individual programmes and projects to achieve higher-level strategic objectives in Asia.

For example, since it is not always possible to compartmentalise regional problems into neat boxes corresponding to ASEAN and SAARC, triangular communication among the EU, ASEAN and SAARC should be encouraged for issues of common concern that call for approaches covering more than just one sub-region. The Rohingya crisis in Myanmar and the control of infectious diseases are examples, as are matters of regional integration in economic and non-economic fields in general – in addition to which, they involve both Southeast Asian and South Asian countries. Both ASEAN and SAARC are open for, and interested in, triangular collaboration to create more synergies and to encourage mutual learning. These opportunities should be developed. The EU should consider building a working group comprising EU, ASEAN and SAARC representatives to discuss options for triangular co-operation. Such approaches already exist in other regional contexts – for example, with regard to EU-Africa relations where co-operation in selected thematic areas include more than one regional organisation.

In a similar vein, if existing channels of communication and co-operation are pooled, they can be used in a more effective way to propagate international good practice and standards with regard to migrant labour across Asia. The EU's Asia regional programme, with its emphasis on regional economic integration, is ideally suited to support work in this area. Issues such as forced labour and the conditions of work for domestic workers in several parts of the region need to be addressed. The EU should also, through development co-operation and policy dialogue, encourage governments to adopt labour migration policies in line with European values and good practice. It is, therefore, recommended that the strategy's focus on labour migration should be strengthened, and that the topic should be more prominently included in policy dialogues with ASEAN, SAARC and national governments, as well as within ASEM.

Main implementation responsibility: EU HQ, EUDs and partners (especially ASEAN and SAARC Secretariats)

6.1.2 Recommendation 2: Increasing ownership

Consider expanding the direct participation of regional stakeholders in the design of the strategy and programmes under the RSP.

Based on conclusions 2 and 3.

There is currently no formal mechanism in place for consultations with Asian partners on the design of the RSP. Although the Strategy involves a large number and broad range of partners – both at the governmental and civil society levels – it is recommended that a framework should be established for deliberations on the design and objectives of future strategies. The same framework could also be used to gather feedback during the mid-term review process. This would encourage a more participatory approach, strengthen Asian ownership of core strategic goals, foster the regional dimension of the RSP, and reduce the risk of misperceptions of partners' needs – as in the case of SAARC under the current Strategy. There are at least two feasible approaches to the strengthening of participatory elements in the design of future strategies.

First, EUDs could be asked to organise country seminars, comprising key state and civil society partners. Results from these meetings and discussions would then be synthesised in Brussels and be fed into the process of drafting the chapter.

Second, and alternatively, the Commission could use its recent approach to EU-Africa relations as a model and organise a series of seminars on the future relationship between the EU and Asia. The first of the EU-Africa seminars took place in December 2013 and was attended by 50 representatives from 50 states. The strengthening of participatory elements in the conception of thematic programmes should also be considered. FLEGT-Asia would be a suitable pilot. The Steering Committee should be comprised of representatives of EU-DGs. The participation of EUDs, and particularly regional experts and advisers, in priority setting of the support should be enhanced. It is recommended that a regional or an inter-regional advisory group should be re-established, comprising of regional FLEGT experts. This would feed realities on the ground into the policy dialogue and implementation of FLEGT-VPAs. Similar approaches should be considered for other regional programmes in areas such as disaster management, regional economic integration, and uprooted people.

Main implementation responsibility: EU HQ and EUDs.

6.1.3 Recommendation 3: Encouraging burden-sharing

Asian partners, particularly the governments of non-DCI countries, should be encouraged to accept financial burden-sharing for regional-level interventions that are in their own strategic or economic interest. There is a clear necessity to reduce donor dependence in this field.

Based on conclusions 2 and 3.

The RSP identifies 19 countries as “eligible countries in Asia”. At the same time, several areas of intervention – for example, in the priority area “Support to Regional Integration” – also focus on organisations and individual countries that are ineligible for support under DCI. While the practice of including industrialised countries in interventions implemented under the Strategy is allowed under DCI, it has created a situation in which non-DCI partners take for granted EU funding for regional programmes. The most striking example is ASEAN. Given the very prominent involvement of the EU and other donors in helping ASEAN to implement the proposed Economic Community 2015, incentives for ASEAN member states to take more financial responsibility for achieving their own regional strategic vision are low. There is basically no aspect of ASEAN Economic Community that is not supported by donor-funding.

In addition to Singapore and Brunei, as industrialised countries, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand are about to graduate from DCI – meaning that half of the ASEAN member states are no longer eligible under DCI. These countries clearly have the economic and financial potential to provide sizable funds of their own to help implement the ASEAN Community.

The same applies to other initiatives of a regional dimension – such as border management, HPED, refugees and migration, disaster management, and environmental challenges – that form policy priorities of practically all middle- and high-income countries in Asia. The EU should resist the temptation simply to use other financing instruments to substitute for DCI, as this would not reduce donor dependence. Achieving the latter, however, requires a concerted approach with other donors – especially USAID, AUSAID, JICA and GIZ – to avoid a situation in which other donors come in and make up for reduced EU funding. The EU should consider taking the lead in creating a working group, comprising key ASEAN stakeholders, relevant EU Members States and other donors, to address the commitment of ASEAN member states to fund the regional integration process. ASEAN could serve as the test case and a model to reduce donor dependence in other areas of the RSP at a later stage. The EU should therefore initiate such talks, which should, in the first instance, involve the EUD in Jakarta and the ASEAN Secretariat.

Main implementation responsibility: EU HQ, EUD Jakarta.

6.1.4 Recommendation 4: Creating synergies

Consider strengthening the synergies between the regional strategy on the one hand and thematic programmes under DCI and other financing instruments on the other.

Based on conclusions 1 and 4.

To strengthen the relevance of the regional strategy, and to highlight its specific value added to the EU’s development co-operation programme and external relations in general, it needs to be more ex-

PLICITLY and firmly embedded within the overall framework of thematic programmes and financing instruments. Conversely, thematic programmes and financing instruments other than DCI need to demonstrate more clearly how and where they interact with the regional strategy.

A good test case is the new Global Health thematic budget line, which appears to be an explicit effort to gear EU health support more towards regional and global public good. The EU should examine how this can be co-ordinated with regional health interventions. Another area where regional health approaches can be more effective is human resources for health – that is, the migration of health professionals. Some of this is intra-regional, and, where it is trans-continental, sharing of policy experience may be useful. In view of its key role in global infectious disease dynamics, as well as the expertise it has developed in epidemiological surveillance and control, including attempts to deal with associated governance issues, China needs to be engaged in this discussion. This also illustrates that there is more scope in achieving synergies between the co-operation programme and policy dialogues. It is important that policy dialogues are regularly supported by European high-level diplomacy, not only to increase EU visibility in Asia, but also to strengthen the effectiveness of the EU's dual approach (development programme and policy dialogues).

A further aspect of synergies is the way in which regional-level projects interact with each other. As elaborated in the conclusions, an increase in co-ordination and co-operation between and among regional-level and bilateral interventions has been achieved. However, possibilities and opportunities for synergies among regional projects are not yet being fully exploited. This is particularly the case for interventions in non-economic areas and/or a civil society focus, especially ASEF, TEIN, Erasmus Mundus, READI and Asia-Europe Dialogue. As all these projects have overlapping thematic focal points, stronger co-ordination and co-operation should be encouraged. It is recommended that regular communication mechanisms should be established among the team leaders of projects that work in overlapping or related thematic areas.

Better co-ordination between the EU and Member States to increase European visibility –and, thereby, leverage – in Asia is an additional important aspect related to synergies. The EEAS and member states should put more effort into co-ordinating the European representation in policy dialogues, with the objective of avoiding diplomatic setbacks in the future and making sure that the seniority of Asian participants is matched by their European counterparts.

Main implementation responsibility: EUDs, EEAS, EUD, implementing partners, EU MS.

6.2 Increasing outcomes of sectoral efforts

6.2.1 Recommendation 5: Regional integration

Objectives for the support of regional integration – in economic and non-economic areas – should be based on realistic assessments of the partners' needs, interests and capacities. Regional approaches should not be followed as a matter of course where bilateral strategies offer a chance for success.

Based on conclusions 1 and 5.

The EU's approach to SAARC is in need of comprehensive and critical reflection. In view of the failure of regional-level support to SAARC, revising the current strategy should be considered. There are four options that could be followed as alternatives or in parallel.

First, if EU co-operation with SAARC as an organisation is the preferred option, support will have to focus on thematic areas that are not seen as sensitive or as matters of high politics by the SAARC member states, and consequently are of interest to the entire group. Cross-border transportation might be a suitable starting point that could also benefit from ASEAN experiences and provide a framework for triangular EU-ASEAN-SAARC co-operation, as pointed out under the first recommendation. However, if EU-SAARC co-operation is to continue as the main focal point of EU regional support to South Asia, consideration should be given to putting the EUD in Kathmandu in charge of managing the co-operation, given that the SAARC Secretariat is also located in Kathmandu.

Second, an alternative regional-level approach could involve other regional organisations in South Asia as main partner, instead of SAARC. ICIMOD has been frequently mentioned in this context.

Third, following on from findings of the MTR 2010, EU-SAARC co-operation could be re-designed as a network of bilateral interventions – that is, similar projects in support of national capacities and commitments in the process of regional integration in all or selected member states.

Fourth, the current approach of subsuming co-operation with SAARC under the pillar of “support to regional integration” could be abandoned altogether to allow for more flexibility in selecting the most suitable areas of co-operation.

Selecting and pursuing the most promising and feasible option initially requires a detailed EU-commissioned assessment of the relative potential of the alternative SAARC strategies, followed by the establishment of a working group, comprising EU and SAARC representatives, to discuss and agree on the future co-operation agenda.

Main implementation responsibility: EU HQ, EUDs in South Asia, particularly Nepal and India, implementing partners.

6.2.2 Recommendation 6: Environment, energy and climate change

Restructure the SWITCH-Asia programme by refocusing its various components and by concentrating on fewer sectors to generate more synergy and impact.

Based on conclusions 2, 6 and 7.

There is a need for more integration of the three main components: the grant projects, the Policy Support programmes, and the Networking Facility (NF).

Grant projects should concentrate on one or only a few national or regional priority sectors and/or specific SCP themes. Moreover, it is recommended that grant projects should conduct a baseline study at the start, and develop and run a monitoring system that measures not only outputs, but also results.

The regional Policy Support Component (PSC) should establish links with grant projects and, in general, with the private sector. In addition, it is recommended that the national PSC programmes should be redesigned to generate more impact, concentrating more on co-ordination instead of conducting many smaller activities, particularly pilot projects. In this context, one option could be that the PSC focuses on furthering sustainable consumption, rather than sustainable production, as they are in a much better position than grant projects to ensure political support and mobilise the high levels of government funding required to roll out sustainable consumption strategies and awareness campaigns.

Finally, the NF should focus much more on results achieved and lessons learned from mature and completed projects – for example, by preparing case studies and disseminating them at sub-regional and sector-based or theme-based networking events. Project implementing partners, as well as policy makers, should be invited to these events.

Main implementation responsibility: EU-HQ and EUDs.

6.2.3 Recommendation 7: Higher education

Keep gateways to European HE systems open for Asian HEIs and explore ways of improving the impacts on teaching and research in Asian HEIs and of providing HE for disadvantaged groups in Asia.

Based on conclusions 3 and 6.

In future, EU interventions could explore three distinct avenues of translating the unused potential of the regional-level HE interventions into real impacts on teaching and research quality and capacity:

First, regional support should find ways to leverage the potential of teaching capacity and research networks of EM graduates. Future EU support to HE systems in Asia should explore how to encourage and promote ways of translating, adopting and implementing European teaching and research practices. In order to do this, future EU support to Asian HE may need to mobilise and leverage existing projects in Asia and Europe that introduce new teaching methods to Asian HEIs. Furthermore, EU support could help to build a bridge between existing teaching resources centres at HEI level and innovative projects outside universities.

The EU should look into possibilities of funding the development of programmes (e.g. train-the-trainer programmes) that leverage the unused potential of EM alumni. Since success of these programmes depends on the sensitivity to conditions in local universities, this is best co-ordinated through the relevant EUDs, which are ideally situated to link EU HE resources with local HE needs. A model could be the MY-EU-Link programme, designed and operated through the Malaysian EUD. These interventions could be launched from existing “centres of teaching and research excellence” at Asian universities. Where these centres do not exist, the country-level interventions could aim to establish centres of this kind, possibly within existing EU Centres at Asian universities.

Second, EU efforts could extend the reach of existing gateways to European HE and generate new gateways by exploring remote and online forms of teaching and research collaboration. A successful expansion of e-learning capacity could greatly increase the reach of, and access to, European HE resources. As observed in this evaluation, the TEIN programme has provided the technical preconditions for expanding remote HE learning and research capacity. This will involve generating suitable content, as well as finding ways to overcome administrative, legal and policy-making barriers to developing e-learning and collaborative research applications for TEIN at local and national level.

Hence, it is recommended that the EU, EUDs and national partners at HEI and policy-making level should look to expand the ASEAN Cyber University Project into a working, testable and extendable programme for providing degree and diploma courses. This process of developing a “minimal viable product” needs to be sensitive to the possibility of legal and administrative barriers at national level. These barriers can then be addressed at regional level through existing policy dialogue mechanisms, with a view to resolving these issues at regional level (i.e. at ASEAN or SARC level). The EU should also examine opportunities within existing funding instruments – most prominently, Erasmus Mundus and TEIN – for promoting the development of e-learning content for the Asian regional context.

Third, extending HE to members of disadvantaged groups would require additional measures aimed at raising individual capabilities to meet the minimum standards for HE participation in general and EM participation in particular. A possible option may comprise the provision of foundation courses to raise individual academic capabilities. An alternative path may be to provide HE courses specifically designed for individuals who do not meet minimum academic requirements.

The EU may consider addressing equity issues separately from providing access to (academically excellent) European HEIs. EUDs are best placed to develop foundation courses or tailored offerings for disadvantaged groups. In particular, these courses and offerings could be integrated in the “centres for teaching and research excellence” as well as the e-learning initiatives. It will be important for EUDs, national partners and European HE partners to move swiftly to create, test and iterate these courses and offerings.

Main implementation responsibility: EU HQ, relevant EUDs and partners.

6.2.4 Recommendation 8: Aid to uprooted people

Raise issues of population uprooting and migration to the regional level, where solutions need to be devised.

Based on conclusions 1, 5, and 6.

The EU has been successful in implementing LRRD approaches. It has, however, failed to raise issues of uprooting higher than the bilateral level or, in some cases, the cross-border level of discussions. A number of issues are, however, inherently regional and call for regional approaches. A specific and worsening problem is the Rohingya crisis, directly involving Myanmar, Thailand, and Bangladesh, and less directly involving Malaysia, Indonesia, and India. The EU should set up a task force between four countries: Thailand, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Indonesia (as a concerned Muslim country, and as home to the Jakarta Delegation serving ASEAN).

The EU should attempt to raise the profile of uprooting in its regional political dialogue. This will be especially challenging because countries from both ASEAN and SAARC are involved. At the same time (and related to recommendation 5), the EU should build on its experience in dealing with labour migration and immigration issues to raise the profile of this problem-area at the regional level. In many cases, technical assistance on international good practice will need to be provided. This is an area in which the European “brand” and long and diverse experience among the Member States, both as importers and exporters of labour, can be brought to bear.

The EU can certainly raise regional labour migration to a higher profile in its bilateral political dialogue in many countries. This should be co-ordinated with relevant ILO offices – for example, in Yangon (especially devoted to forced labour), Bangkok, Manila, and Delhi. The EU should integrate labour migration into its regional economic integration TA on a systematic basis.

Main implementation responsibility: EU HQ, EEAS, EUDs.

6.2.5 Recommendation 9: Regional health

Improve co-ordination between regional health support, bilateral health systems strengthening, and the new Global Health budget line.

Based on conclusions 1, 5, 6, and 7.

As highlighted by the new emphasis on global public good aspects of health in the Global Health budget line, cross-border aspects of health and the need to address free-riding and other market failures have moved to the centre of the EU's development co-operation in health. While bilateral programmes continue to strengthen health systems across the board, from interventions to improve access for the poor to health care finance reform, country-level strengthening is increasingly seen as a necessary step not only to reduce poverty within borders, but also to address global health security.

Due to Asia's key role in global infectious disease dynamics, this presents opportunities for the regional-level co-operation programme. These should be understood to include not only the dramatic emergence of novel viruses, but also creeping problems of drug resistance.

The EU has been a major supporter of improved regional animal and human health co-ordination and co-operation. However, ASEAN and SAARC both require further strengthening – meaning not only that the EU and other donors should continue to provide technical assistance and capacity building, but also that a meaningful institutional commitment is required on the part of ASEAN and SAARC.

Better co-ordination is needed between regional initiatives to support networking, national programmes of health systems strengthening and sector reform, and the new Global Health thematic budget line. Epidemiology, in particular, needs to be strengthened – a task that can be co-ordinated with support in the field of HE and research, where national and international training programmes can be financed, as well as national research laboratories – the first line of defence against emergent diseases.

Links between the countries of Southeast Asia, South Asia and China need to be addressed in the context of a truly Asian approach to infectious disease surveillance and control. A first step towards this might be the convening of an EU-sponsored pan-Asian conference, bringing together human health and animal health experts from Southeast Asia, China and South Asia. It is especially valuable to stimulate cross-disciplinary contacts – for example, between medical and social scientists, between medical doctors and health systems experts, and between public sector experts and the pharmaceutical industry.

Many factors make this an attractive area for the EU's Asia regional programme to work in. These include: the recurrent nature of emergent disease; the role of Asia; the need for public action extending beyond the "boom phase" of the epidemiological cycle (the flurry of activity that follows each significant outbreak); and the need for a broad approach cutting across many sectors.

Main implementation responsibility: EU HQ, EUDs in Asia.