



JUST-JACC-VICT-AG-2016

Action grants to support transnational projects to enhance the
rights of victims of crime

JUSTICE PROGRAMME

GA No. 760270

Enhancing PROtection of Children –
vicTims of crime
E-PROTECT

WP1: Management and Coordination

E-PROTECT Interim External Evaluation
Report

WP1 Leader: Law and Internet Foundation



This project is funded by the EU. This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Justice Programme (2014-2020) of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

Project co-funded by the European Commission within the JUST Programme		
Dissemination Level:		
PU	Public	X
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
EU-RES	Classified Information: RESTREINT UE (Commission Decision 2005/444/EC)	
EU-CON	Classified Information: CONFIDENTIEL UE (Commission Decision 2005/444/EC)	
EU-SEC	Classified Information: SECRET UE (Commission Decision 2005/444/EC)	
Document version control:		
Version	Author(s)	Date
Version 1	Originated by: External evaluator	16/09/2018
Version 2	Updated by: External evaluator	26/09/2018
Version 3	Reviewed and updated by: External evaluator	27/09/2018



Table of contents

1. Background.....	4
2. Methodology.....	5
3. Findings	6
Relevance	6
Quality of Implementation	8
Quality of Cooperation.....	10
Quality of Dissemination.....	12
Impact and Sustainability	13
4. Recommendations	15
5. Conclusion	16
Annex 1 – Evaluation Matrix	17
Annex 2 – Online Survey 1	19
Annex 3 – Online Survey 2	20



1. Background

The current interim external evaluation report is a key element of implementing the objectives set in the E-PROTECT Evaluation strategy, adopted in the first months following the project launch.

External evaluation is an integral element of project design along with monitoring and internal evaluation processes to be carried out by the project partners. Monitoring and internal evaluation are key pillars, which hold the project to the highest of standards in all aspects. External evaluation is contributing in that regard by providing unbiased assessment of project implementation and results. External evaluation aims to conduct an independent assessment on the project progress and results, as well as their applicability and further exploitation, and to verify the quality of the implemented activities and achieved results. Thus, external evaluation provides the Project Management Team and the Team Leaders with complementary source of information about the effectiveness of the project implementation process and its capability to achieve consistent results that meet the target groups' needs and target audiences' expectations.

The external evaluation logic and processes have focused on following areas: Relevance; Quality of implementation; Quality of cooperation; Quality of dissemination; Impact and Sustainability.

External evaluation has aimed to answer the questions on results reached and the key project implementation processes such as:

1. Whether and to what extent does the project achieve the desired outcomes?
2. What is the value of the outcomes for the key stakeholders and target groups?
3. How well does the project implementation match the needs of the relevant target groups?
4. How effective are the management and coordination of the project?
5. Is there a need to fine-tune or redesign the project implementation plan or schedule?

In light of the activities carried out and deliverables produced, the current interim report focuses more on questions – 1, 4 and 5, which are related more on internal and development processes. Question 2 and 3 will be fully explored during final evaluation phase.





2. Methodology

The interim external evaluation synthesises information collected through the following means:

- Online surveys for project partners. Templates of the surveys are available in Annex 2 and 3.
- Desk research on project documentation, which partners upload on the dedicated online project repository (Dropbox).
- Quasi-structured observations of activities. The external evaluator attended the Kick-off meeting in Sofia, First virtual partner meeting, the E-PROTECT Policy briefing, also in Sofia, and the Interim partner meeting in Thessaloniki.
- Ongoing communication with project coordination team.

The information was analysed on the basis of the evaluation matrix, adopted within the project's evaluation strategy. In this matrix each evaluation area (Relevance, Quality of Implementation, Quality of Cooperation, Quality of Dissemination, Impact and Sustainability) is matched to the 3 set of indicators (quantitative, qualitative, and process indicators), highlighted in monitoring and internal evaluation processes. The matrix is available for reference in Annex 1.

The analysis has enabled provision of a list of key findings for each evaluation area and also put forward essential recommendations to take into consideration during the second half of project implementation.

The current evaluation covers the first twelve months of project implementation (October 2017 – September 2018).



3. Findings

3.1. Relevance

The evaluation under this area has aimed to identify whether the project was able to successfully address the original objectives/priorities and identified needs and issues relevant to the participating organisations and target groups, contribute to the existing knowledge and practices, and bring added value at EU level, which could not be achieved in stand-alone basis in a particular Member State.

The project implementation plan adopted in the first months of the project launch ensured a common reference for action, which served as a first key prerequisite that the original objectives and priorities would be complied to. In addition, the project leader introduced a strong coordination mechanism, which further supported keeping the project lifecycle in line with initial expectations.

At the current interim stage, it can be confirmed that a significant progress has been made in terms of reaching indicators planned in the area under evaluation. The progress with regard to indicators, related to interactions with target groups is to be further populated with evidence, since major activities in that regard are planned for the second half of project implementation.

During the evaluated period, the partnership focussed on developing several key deliverables such as reports, as well as the E-PROTECT platform, which will form the basis for future dissemination and multiplication processes. The interim period can be defined as a more focussed on internal processes period and as a preparation for the direct interaction with target groups and the wider public.

The report-type deliverables produced have provided two comprehensive strands of information – the first one focusing on national systems represented by participating countries and the second, emphasizing on transnational comparison of developments in the field addressed by the project. The reports were written in a professional manner with strong quality assurance from the relevant lead partners. Their availability in English language version creates conditions for international





multiplication. The national language versions, on the other hand, will provide wide access to content to all target groups addressed.

The E-PROTECT platform has been designed and launched. The first observations suggest that it will offer target groups adequate information resources. Furthermore, it will allow them to utilize internal communication functionality for contacting each other on issues of common professional interest.

On overall, all deliverables demonstrate solid potential to address the initially identified needs of target groups. Still, their actual quality will be evaluated in the second half of project life cycle during which actual interaction with target users will take place.

During the evaluated period, the applicant succeeded in organising one of the first public events, oriented towards target groups. The Policy Briefing that took place on 17.05.2017 in Sofia was held in the premises of the European Commission in Bulgaria. The Policy Briefing gathered professionals working with children victims of crime, policy-makers, general public, media, and other key stakeholders. It is worth noticing that the event was attended by representatives of national authorities such as the State Agency for Child Protection and the Ministry of Education and Science.

The event included presentations of 5 speakers – 2 representing the coordinating organization and 3 representing relevant NGOs in the field of the project. The information provided was comprehensive and linked to presenting the project in general, outlining its main achievements so far. The second accent was presenting a synthesis of research work, carried out by partners, which was with high degree of clarity and relevance. The presentations from other NGOs focused on the current state-of-the-art in the field child protection as perceived by the EU Directive, addressed by E-PROTECT project.



3.2. Quality of Implementation

The evaluation has aimed to identify whether the project activities were carried out as planned; effective measures were implemented to monitor and evaluate the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of implementation; the tangible outputs produced are of high quality and contain elements for becoming a good practice.

As highlighted in findings under the previous evaluation criterion, the partnership has focussed during the first 12 months of project lifecycle on developing all key tangible deliverables (e.g., reports and the E-PROTECT platform). The first impressions for these outputs suggest high level of professionalism demonstrated by each partner in their elaboration. Furthermore, it should be highlighted that every project partner has been highly active in ensuring effective collaboration and mitigating measures in case of any emergent situation.

Comparing partners' satisfaction with the different deliverables, it can be emphasised that there is almost unanimous agreement that the report-type of deliverable are highly satisfactory. In terms of platform (web and mobile), there seems to have potential for further partners' input for its finalization. During the second partner meeting in Thessaloniki, all partners have provided very constructive feedback on the initial design of the platform and its functionalities, which will further improve its quality before being presented to target groups and users.

A strong positive finding to be underlined is the fact that partners were highly dedicated to following the commonly agreed parameters, when implementing tasks related to outputs development.

In the terms of timing, some of the activities were not implemented as planned (e.g., policy briefings and policy guidelines). While it is evident that common plan should be adhered to, in these particular cases the decision on postponing outputs implementation was reasonable and based on partners' aspiration for quality.

Another issue identified, was related to role change between partners within implementation of WP3. Partner from Austria mistakenly took over the lead of one deliverable under WP3, which had initially





been assigned to the partner from Italy. Eventually, this unexpected change was addressed, so not to affect the quality of implementation.

One of the key aspects to assess under the current evaluation criterion was related to partners' project staff satisfaction and engagement with carrying out dedicated activities. It is important to highlight the overall satisfaction of the team with the project implementation has increased with almost 10% in comparison with the results from the first survey. Furthermore, the level of high engagement with project activities was sustained and is above 90%.



This project is funded by the EU. This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Justice Programme (2014-2020) of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

3.3. Quality of Cooperation

The evaluation has aimed to establish whether the established mechanisms for coordination and communication among partners proved effective.

A strong and professional coordination has been introduced from the very beginning by the project coordinating organization. It has been sustained throughout the whole evaluated period. The regular and targeted communication is one of the factors that contributed to overall quality of implementation of activities.

All partners expressed their high satisfaction with the overall project coordination. Wide range of good practices in terms of communication were identified such as:

- Regular circulars with information regarding the project implementation and instructions on the upcoming activities;
- Maintaining an online project repository (Dropbox);
- Regular skype calls;
- Expediency in response to e-mail queries by the project leading organization.

In terms of interaction within the individual WPs around one third of partners suggest that its effectiveness can be improved. One example for area of improvement can be highlighted related to implementation of WP5, particularly regarding communication/coordination of policy briefing events.

During the period reviewed, the External evaluator attended the Kick-off meeting (Sofia), one virtual partner meeting, and the Interim partner meeting (Thessaloniki). The overall impressions from these key activities to ensure high quality of cooperation are positive. The agendas for all meetings were designed, so to achieve maximum effectiveness. The moderation of the meetings was focussed on compliance with agenda items. Some partners expressed in the first month of the project the need to have more time allocated for open discussions and sharing among participants in these meetings. This recommendation was taken on board during the second meeting in Thessaloniki, during which





partners had the opportunity to engage in an open and constructive exchange of opinions, which will contribute to further improving of the overall quality of work.

In terms of effectiveness of communication channels/tools used at partnership level Virtual meetings/Conference/Skype calls were rated as the most effective, followed by e-mail circulars and online documentation repository (Dropbox).



This project is funded by the EU. This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Justice Programme (2014-2020) of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.



3.4. Quality of Dissemination

The evaluation has aimed to confirm that dissemination activities were of good quality and in line with the initial plan, as well as if the established indicators were met.

As highlighted in above evaluation areas during the first twelve months of the project implementation, partners were focussed on developing key deliverables. Dissemination efforts were oriented towards setting up a common dissemination approach and presenting project's mission and activities. Partners adopted a dissemination strategy, visual identity pack, and set of dissemination materials.

Three social media accounts were set up in Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to ensure project's online presence. The number of Facebook posts is 36 posts, on Twitter – 22, and on LinkedIn - 10. The most active social media channel is definitely Facebook. It was regularly populated with both general and specific news items. According to reporting data delivered by the dissemination leading organization from Greece (WP5), the highest number of Facebook followers attracted from partner countries are from Bulgaria, Italy, and Greece.

In the reviewed period one from the five planned policy briefing events took place. This type of events proved to be a suitable way to gather all relevant stakeholders and target groups and present project's relevance and long-term contribution to the field at hand. The focus of the briefing events is to present the project's main outputs that could be useful to target groups and also highlight the existing efforts of other stakeholders in the same area of interest.

In terms of engagement with dissemination, most partners spend no more than 30% of their project staff time with ongoing dissemination activities. Every partner maps ongoing key activities in a working dissemination log on the online repository (Dropbox). Currently, partners from Bulgaria and Greece have submitted reporting data in the log.



3.5. Impact and Sustainability

The evaluation has aimed to confirm that the project has delivered impact on the participating organisations, target groups, target audiences, and beyond the partnership. Under current evaluation area, evidence has been sought as to partners' approach towards maintaining activities and results after the EU funding end and also project's potential and prospects for scalability and/or transfer into other fields, areas, or contexts.

Data collected at the interim stage of the project implementation allows for registering emerging signs of impact or potential areas of impact and making initial forecasts with regard to impact and sustainability. The comprehensive assessment of this evaluation area would be feasible at the final project reporting stage, when a wide range of evidence would be available to inform reliable evaluation findings.

As highlighted in the above sections, there is a stable high satisfaction rate of engagement with current proposal among the whole partnership, which is a first strong supporting argument that the current project will contribute to achieving strong positive impact on participating organisations and their staff members. The quality of cooperation among partners has contributed to the development of high-level deliverables (e.g., reports and the E-PROTECT platform). The professional design of deliverables is a key factor for attracting attention of target groups and raising motivation to use these deliverables.

The comprehensive dissemination approach, established by the partners, will be pivotal in multiplying and mainstreaming deliverables, paving the way for their sustainable exploitation. In order for impact and sustainability to be achieved in a balanced manner, regular and ongoing information activities are needed across the whole partnership.

Providing for language versions of deliverables, including English version is a positive step in ensuring wider accessibility for target groups across countries that are beyond the partnership, which is a factor supporting future scalability and transfer to other fields.





On overall, at this point of the project implementation, there are prerequisites for positive impact on all levels and consequently, sustainability of results generated.



This project is funded by the EU. This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Justice Programme (2014-2020) of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

4. Recommendations

Relevance

- No recommendations at interim stage.

Quality of Implementation

- Keeping ongoing focus on deadlines and concrete tasks allocation for each partner.

Quality of Cooperation

- Keeping the good practice of ensuring more open discussion and free exchange of ideas among project staff members in the working process.

Quality of Dissemination

- Encouraging regular and active dissemination efforts of all partners during the second half of the project implementation period.
- Ensuring more promotion activities for the upcoming public events to ensure attendance.
- Encouraging interaction between speakers/presenters and the audience during events. It would be advised, after each presentation to leave 5 minutes for Q&A session.
- Considering planning of video recording or online streaming of the events. This is a preventive measure to ensure wider attendance rate and also a dissemination material to use later on. There is no need to record the whole event, but only main highlights. For example, the synthesis of good practices in Europe with regard to child protection.

Impact and Sustainability

- Developing a sustainability roadmap, highlighting concrete steps that partners will utilize to embed project outcomes in the follow-up period.





5. Conclusion

The interim external evaluation conducted provides rich evidence that the E-PROTECT project holds the potential of being nominated by the European Commission as a European good practice.

The analysis of all data collected provides indications for high performance and added value under each of the main evaluation criteria explored such as Relevance; Quality of implementation; Quality of cooperation; Quality of dissemination; Impact and Sustainability.

The recommendations made by the External evaluator are not critical in any regard and are to a larger extent proposal for fine-tuning at interim stage, which will further solidify project's high quality.

It is essential to highlight that partners have been working in full transparency with the External evaluator and are open for constructive dialogue in any aspect of the project implementation, which is an additional quality mark.

The second half of project lifecycle will be a key test for all deliverables produced. In this period the focus will be on direct interaction with target groups. The data on users' satisfaction with project's outcomes to be collected will serve as a first-hand evidence of its long-term impact and sustainability. The external evaluation will focus on establishing mechanism together with partners to ensure that sufficient feedback from wide range of target groups is compiled and reviews in the context of the evaluation criteria adopted.



Annex 1 – Evaluation Matrix

Indicator		Number / Percentage	External Evaluation Criteria*				
			Relevance	Quality of Implementation	Quality of cooperation	Quality of dissemination	Impact and Sustainability
Quantitative indicators							
Reports	11		x				
Comparative study	1	x	x				
Language versions	6	x	x				
Policy briefings participants	150	x	x		x		
Seminars participants	375	x	x		x		
e-Discussions participants	min 105	x	x		x		
MeetUps participants	375	x	x		x		
Virtual conference participants	min 150	x	x		x		
Stakeholders reached via dissemination activities	Min 2000	x	x		x		
E-PROTECT platform/social media visitors	min 1500	x	x		x		
International conference participants	min 100	x	x		x		
Project reports & budget reviews	2		x	x			
Project work meetings	5		x	x			
Qualitative indicators							



This project is funded by the EU. This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Justice Programme (2014-2020) of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

Target groups' positive feedback & satisfaction	min 80%	x	x		x	x
E-PROTECT outputs positive feedback	min 80%	x	x			x
Target groups' improved competences & motivation	min 85%	x	x			x
Dissemination & communication activities positive feedback	min 85%	x	x		x	x
E-PROTECT staff satisfaction & motivation	min 90%		x	x		x
Involvement of individual team members in performance monitoring, evaluation, and improvement	min 40% of non-management staff, working on the project			x		
Process indicators						
Timely implementation of tasks	min 90%		x	x	x	x
Compliance with JUST Programme rules	no deviation		x	x		
Continuous & transparent information flow	min 80% project documentation		x	x		x
Updates made to the E-PROTECT Implementation plan	min 2		x	x		
Completeness of set requirements for deliverables	min 95%		x			x
Schedule variance	max 2 months		x	x	x	





Annex 2 – Online Survey 1



1st Online Survey.pdf



This project is funded by the EU. This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Justice Programme (2014-2020) of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.



Annex 3 – Online Survey 2



2nd Online
Survey.pdf



This project is funded by the EU. This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Justice Programme (2014-2020) of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.