

FINAL REPORT

Evaluation of APPEAR projects (programme periods I and II)

On behalf of the Austrian Agency for International
Cooperation in Education and Research (OeAD GmbH)

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APPEAR is a programme of the Austrian Development Cooperation

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List of Abbreviations

AAP	Advanced Academic Partnerships
AAU	Addis Ababa University
ADA	Austrian Development Agency
ADC	Austrian Development Corporation
APPEAR	Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development
ARARI	Amhara Region Agricultural Research Institute
BOKU	Universität für Bodenkultur Wien
CEval	Center for Evaluation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Austria
OeAD	Österreichische Austauschdienst-Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung
PwD	Persons with Disabilities
SwD	Students with Disabilities
ToR	Terms of Reference
UBD	University of Bahir Dar
UoG	University of Gondar
UoV	University of Vienna
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
WUS	World University Austria

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Executive summary

Introduction

In February 2018, the Austrian Agency for International Mobility and Cooperation in Education, Science and Research (OeAD-GmbH), mandated a project-level evaluation of the Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development (APPEAR). APPEAR is conceived and financed by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and implemented by OeAD-GmbH. The programme contributes to the realisation of the 'Higher Education and Scientific Cooperation' strategy in support of Higher Education and Research for Development on an academic institutional level in the priority regions of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC). Since 2009 the APPEAR Selection Board selected 43 academic partnership projects for funding of which 18 were already completed and 25 are still ongoing.

Purpose of the evaluation was to assess granted projects, while not examining meso and macro levels of the APPEAR programme. The following three claims were analysed (i) APPEAR projects consider the programme's guidelines and principles, (ii) APPEAR projects are results-oriented and contribute to the objectives of the programme and (iii) APPEAR projects are relevant, effective, efficient, sustainable and have educational, institutional and societal impact.

To do so, the evaluation applied a theory-based approach, with an exemplary Theory of Change guiding the analysis. Further, a multi-method approach was pursued, making use of primary and secondary data sources as well as qualitative and quantitative data. Specific evaluation questions were provided in the ToR and structured in an analysis grid, to determine respective indicators, data collection instruments and analysis methods. The evaluation applied a systematic document review to analyse secondary data, such as project applications, annual reports, monitoring documentation, among others. To collect primary data in-depth interviews with project team members (48) and Austria-based OeAD-, ADA- and BMEIA-staff (6), a qualitative questionnaire to ADA staff in partner countries (8 responses), observations at university departments and stakeholder sites, a focus group discussion with current project-bound APPEAR scholars and two online surveys directed to (i) project team members and (ii) APPEAR scholars were implemented.

While retrieving data from all 43 projects through documents and surveys, nine projects were selected as case studies and interviews and discussions were held with project team members and stakeholders involved. Field visits took place in Ethiopia and Uganda and projects in Nicaragua were included via Skype® interviews.

Findings are presented according to the three claims (i.e. consideration of principles, result and programme objective orientation and fulfilment of OECD/DAC criteria) examined in the evaluation.

Principles

The evaluation found evidence that the majority of projects is participatory and demand-driven. Preparatory Funding and the option for Southern project team members to coordinate the project are crucial to support participation. Further, it was found that both empirical and practical orientation of projects is high with the latter varying in terms of means to establish linkages to practice and external stakeholders, such as the community. In respect to a culturally open-minded knowledge exchange, the evaluation found that the majority of projects has operationalised this principle through its project work. Nevertheless, according to project documents, measures to enable Austrian universities to be knowledge recipients are not always sufficiently articulated.

Project team members are aware of added values, i.e. disability mainstreaming, alignment to the ADC country strategy and the inclusion of young researchers, but actual implementation varies substantially across projects.

Result-Orientation and consideration of programme objective

Answers to this question are based on the analysis of projects' logical frameworks, which, according to the evaluation teams' understanding, are the basis for results-orientation and are an important planning tool. However, it needs to be acknowledged that – in practice – the logical frameworks received are discussed by the APPEAR selection board only to a limited extent and are rather no exclusion criterion for selection; other aspects are more in the focus. Examining projects' logical frameworks reveals certain weaknesses in terms of conceptualization (i.e. defining outputs, outcomes and impacts) as well as in terms of formulation of SMART indicators. The programme objective is often not considered completely in the logical frameworks.

Relevance

For participating institutions and/or departments

Evidence suggests that APPEAR projects are considered relevant by project team members, external stakeholders as well as ADA staff. Austrian project team members perceive the project to be less relevant in comparison to their Southern counterparts. The study further revealed that the thematic relevance for either Austrian or Southern institutes might differ substantially. While projects are relevant from a development perspective for institutions in the Global South (due to e.g. lack of well-trained staff or limited data availability), relevance for Austrian institutes rather lies for instance in new research opportunities or the practical application of research methods in the field.

For the development of the participating countries and beneficiaries

According to project team members and ADA staff, APPEAR projects are relevant from a country development perspective and for final beneficiaries. Case Study interviews revealed that some projects are aligned to national or regional government strategies and have an innovative character, targeting a relevant niche and drawing attention on specific issues. The relevance for beneficiaries is assessed as high in the online survey and document analysis, but nevertheless there are projects that have a strong research character, where direct benefits for final beneficiaries remain unclear.

Effectiveness

Achievement of outputs and outcomes

The evaluation found that, in general, main outputs were achieved, but not always on time, and exceptions (often one or two single activities that could not be realized) were articulated and explained. Reasons for non-achievement include the difficulties for Ethiopian universities to comply with the ten percent pre-financing before the final disbursement, the short time frame, or lacking commitment by external stakeholders. Project team members perceive the achievement of outcomes as high with the 'development of individual capacities', 'increased cultural awareness' and 'mutual knowledge exchange triggered' being rated the highest. However, completed projects have rated the 'improvement in research quality' significantly lower than ongoing projects.

Main factors for the achievement of outputs and outcomes include (1) proximity through face-to-face interaction in temporary spaces as well as frequent communication, (2) context experience in both Northern and Western academic environments and (3) the network of OeAD scholars as basis for affiliation and ownership towards the project. Hindering factors centre around (1) external influ-

ences such as political turmoil and instability, (2) bureaucratic barriers at Southern institutions clashing with stringent administrative requirements by the APPEAR Programme, and (3) staff turnover jeopardizing sustainable capacity development.

Influence of Participatory Funding

Twelve projects out of 45 received Preparatory Funding, enabling them to build up a close working relationship between actors involved, which was appreciated throughout. Case studies showed that the opportunity to meet face-to-face before project proposal submission, led to truly participatory approaches in project design and lasted until implementation.

Enrichment of project-bound scholarship holders

While project-bound scholarships are considered as very relevant by team members to develop capacities and build new academic networks, their instrumentalisation varies across projects – especially in terms of project engagement of scholarship holders. A part of current scholarship holders expressed the wish to be more involved during their stay in Austria to feel greater commitment and ownership towards the project, considering that they should sustain project activities upon their return.

Efficiency

Management of cooperation

Project teams in both Austria and the Global South assessed the collaboration to be fruitful, effective and participatory. Team members stated to have coped adequately with difficulties. Conflicts rarely occur, but if so, mediation by the APPEAR team is required and provided.

Budget distribution

Project team members showed satisfaction with the budget allocation and emphasized the importance of the rise in budget (to 20 %) for non-priority partners, who form part of regional partnerships some projects are aiming at. Project teams further balanced out uneven budget distribution between priority and non-priority countries through cross-financing through other funds or in-kind working hours put in.

Cost-benefit ratio

About two thirds of survey respondents from project teams perceive the cost-benefit ratio as satisfactory. High motivation among project team members involved contribute to the achievements of valuable benefits. The administrative efforts needed are considered as high by some project team members, especially when considering the comparably small project volume (in contrast to other donor-financed projects), but support and guidance by the APPEAR office is highly appreciated to cope with administration and scholarships.

Impact

Sustainable development of institutional and individual capacities and improvement of scientific / teaching potential

Project team members confirmed that APPEAR projects contribute to the generation of transnational and transcultural spaces of knowledge, the creation of long-term academic partnerships and that they have the potential to contribute to poverty alleviation. Yet, respondents from completed projects give lower ratings in these regards. In addition, the evaluation poses the hypothesis that con-

sidering the nature and scope of APPEAR projects, the most significant impact is achieved at institutes and with persons involved that have little experience with international cooperation projects. The comparably small project volumes enable relatively new and less experienced project partners to gain valuable know-how and assure high commitment and ownership among them. Lastly, allocating the project coordination in the South leads to additional impacts, such as empowerment of the department and persons involved, strengthened south-south relationships (when more than one institution is located in the South) and intensified regional knowledge exchange.

Dissemination of results

Means to disseminate projects' results range from conventional research papers and books, to websites, social media, radio and television to stakeholder workshops and summer schools and webinars. Furthermore, data shows that projects share newly generated knowledge and data to a great extent.

Perceived association to Sustainable Development Goals

Project team members mostly associate their project to SDG 4 – *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*, SDG 1 – *End poverty in all its forms everywhere* and SDG 5 – *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*. The results coincide with APPEAR main programme objectives and emphasize upon their gender mainstreaming strategy.

Sustainability

Likelihood of outcomes to continue

While the majority of project members state that outcomes are likely to continue, with completed projects showing less positive assessments than ongoing projects, the document review suggests that sustainability measures are insufficiently documented. In partner institutions, academic and administrative staff is available to continue initiated change, but financial resources appear to be missing. The sustainability of project outcomes for final beneficiaries is not assured, especially for research-focused projects, which require other actors to implement (suggested) changes.

Incorporation of capacities and achievements and application of knowledge

The survey suggests that partners in the South have made greater use of project results (e.g. in research activities, teaching and in strengthening curricula) than Austrian partners involved with the difference being statistically significant. Favouring factors to ensure sustainability of project measures include the constant inclusion of local stakeholders in the project process, the formalization of partnerships by using MoUs and the successful re-integration of scholarship holders after finalising their studies, supported by contractual agreements between scholars and their home universities. Eventually, upon project end, a digital or physical platform as go-to-point to continue and enhance project-related activities is beneficial to keep up the momentum of change initiated by the partnerships.

Gender

Equal contribution of women and men to project implementation

A gender-disaggregated analysis of project coordinating position suggests a higher share of male team members and coordinators. Thereby, 44 % of projects are coordinated by Austrian men. Qualitative information retrieved that during project implementation, on the ground, projects attempt to equally integrate men and women by e.g. setting up a gender-balanced trainer team.

Inclusion of gender mainstreaming, raising of gender awareness, attitudes toward gender changed

Gender has been crystallized as an important analytical category in research with 62 % of survey respondents stating that gender is integrated in APPEAR research. The share of scholarship holders integrating gender issues in their thesis is substantially lower with 22 % barely or not at all integrating it. 63 % of survey respondents (project bound scholarships) state that gender was part of their studies / training in both Austria and home country.

The evaluation results suggest that gender mainstreaming differs across projects, disciplines and regions. In most projects located within Social Science or Education departments, gender mainstreaming is incorporated throughout, whereas some projects from technical disciplines lack profound understanding. Eventually, case studies showed that learning processes on gender issues during the project cycle take place and suggestions / feedback received are adopted and applied in the field.

Project-level Recommendations (Directed to project team members)

Ongoing projects

Recommendation 1: Involve external stakeholders, such as government officers, related NGOs, community leaders, among others, to the best extent possible in project activities, as they potentially carry on the changes induced at societal level. Thereby, underlying concepts and theories applied by researchers involved that might be very abstract should be translated into tangible and accessible knowledge to ensure that the same language is spoken during stakeholder workshops and consultations.

Recommendation 2: In some projects it remained unclear whether research findings, guidelines or other final products are actually used or implemented. Project teams should thus draw / continue to draw on contextualized approaches to share project-related findings and knowledge. Especially in the Global South, where often the internet is accessed via smart phones, new means of communication, such as Social Media, but also Webinars and Massive Open Online Courses, among others, might yield potential to reach out to further target groups. Moreover, ICT solutions, such as mobile-based monitoring could be explored further. For Austrian project partners it should be clear that the APPEAR project they are engaged in is not only a research fund with the aim to achieve publications. The core development objective of the project should be also put as priority among Austrian partners involved. Project teams in Austria should equally advocate their cause within their context and come up with adequate dissemination methods to share project knowledge and results. Lecture series, public stakeholder symposiums, newspaper articles or advocacy measures, as identified in several projects, could be replicated across different projects. Eventually, when disseminating information, APPEAR projects should join the discourse on the Sustainable Development Goals and communicate connections between projects and the 17 goals.

Recommendation 3: A share of project-bound scholarship holders articulated the wish to be more frequently informed about project activities. Project teams should, therefore, try to update and involve current students as much as desired to increase their ownership of the project. Means to inform scholarship holders comprise (i) including them in the email list, (ii) engaging them in conferences, workshops and symposia, (iii) set up a WhatsApp® group to share updates from field work, among others.

Future projects

Recommendations 4: Project teams should allocate time and resources in defining a detailed exit strategy for their project i.e. long term financing options and/or the takeover of project activities by target group or beneficiaries, ideally already at project proposal phase. In some cases, external support and consultancy might be necessary and could be accounted for within the projects' budgeted activities.

Recommendations 5: Draft a logical framework (or any similar tool) that can be realistically applied and that includes SMART indicators. Particular attention should be given to outcome level indicators. It is recommended to also set (learning) targets for the Austrian institution in the logical framework to further strengthen the aspect of mutual knowledge exchange. It is recommended to accommodate time for peer-learning on results-oriented project management, especially for those team members who are inexperienced in that regard, to emphasize on the importance of logical frameworks and related tools.

Programme Level Recommendation (Directed to OeAD/ADA)

Recommendation 6: Foster communication and exchange between projects. Learnings on achieving gender mainstreamed projects, results-oriented project management or measures to integrate the community should be broadly shared among project teams to build on the experiences made. OeAD provides comprehensive information on their website through blog posts and podcasts and sets up project presentations. In addition, regional, more informal forums could be set up, where challenges could be discussed and jointly solutions could be found.

Recommendation 7: To further support the OeAD/ APPEAR alumni network, both digital and physical alumni platforms should be set up to foster continued exchange of knowledge and expertise. Platforms for alumni and cooperation projects with the APPEAR programme are rarely present so far, considering that other donors spend much higher resources on cooperation and mobility projects. OeAD should make use of these tightly knitted links between alumni and support the realization of further initiatives. For example, funding could be provided for supporting – upon application – thematic focused workshops hosted by alumni.

Recommendation 8: Re-discuss the inclusion of the logical framework in the application documents or consider alternative tools to facilitate the illustration of pathways of change. If the logical framework is kept, it is strongly advised to (i) review the terminology used, (ii) pursue a clearer separation of output, outcomes and impact and (iii) foster its usage among project team members.

Recommendation 9: Sustain and extend the two APPEAR intrinsic mechanisms of Preparatory Funding and the option of project coordination by southern partners to achieve high participation and ownership by all actors involved. Further, it should be considered whether the programme already determines that coordination of AAPs must occur in the South. Seeing success stories from the case study projects, AAPs seem appropriate to pass on main responsibilities to departments in the South for leveraging on the additional impacts mentioned above.

Zusammenfassung

Einleitung

Der Österreichische Austauschdienst (OeAD-GmbH) beauftragte im Februar 2018 eine Projektevaluierung des Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development (APPEAR). APPEAR wird von der Agentur der Österreichischen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (ADA) konzipiert und finanziert und von der OeAD-GmbH umgesetzt. Das Programm trägt dazu bei, ihre Strategie „Hochschulbildung und Wissenschaftskooperation“ zur Unterstützung von Hochschulbildung und Forschung für Entwicklung auf akademischer Ebene in den Schwerpunktregionen der Österreichischen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (OEZA) umzusetzen. Bisher wurden 43 akademische Partnerschaftsprojekte finanziert, von denen 18 bereits abgeschlossen sind und 25 noch laufen.

Ziel dieser Evaluierung war es, die bisher bewilligten Projekte zu bewerten. Zentraler Gegenstand der Analyse war die Überprüfung der drei folgenden Annahmen: (i) APPEAR-Projekte berücksichtigen die Richtlinien und Prinzipien des Programms, (ii) APPEAR-Projekte sind ergebnisorientiert und tragen zu den Zielen des Programms bei und (iii) APPEAR-Projekte sind relevant, effektiv, effizient, nachhaltig und haben bildungspolitische, institutionelle und gesellschaftliche Wirkung.

Bei der Evaluation kam ein theoriebasierter Ansatz zur Anwendung, bei der eine beispielhafte Theory of Change zur Beantwortung der Evaluationsfragen diente. Für die Datenanalyse verfolgte das Evaluationsteam einen Multi-Methoden Ansatz, der auf der Nutzung primärer und sekundärer Datenquellen sowie qualitativer und quantitativer Daten beruhte. Die vom OeAD in der Leistungsbeschreibung bereitgestellten spezifischen Evaluationsfragen wurden hierfür in einem Analyseraster strukturiert. Zu den jeweiligen Evaluationsfragen wurden entsprechende Indikatoren, Datenerfassungsinstrumente und Analysemethoden bestimmt. Im Rahmen der Evaluierung wurden u.a. Sekundärdaten wie Projektanträge, Jahresberichte, Monitoringberichte systematisch ausgewertet. Zur Gewinnung von Primärdaten wurden Tiefeninterviews mit Projektteammitgliedern (48) und Mitarbeiter/innen in Österreich von OeAD, ADA und BMEIA-Mitarbeiter/innen (6), eine qualitative schriftliche Befragung von ADA-Mitarbeiter/innen in Partnerländern (8), Beobachtungen in Universitätsabteilungen und an Projektstandorten, eine Fokusgruppen-Diskussion mit aktuellen projektgebundenen APPEAR-Stipendiat/innen und zwei Online-Umfragen mit (i) Projektteammitgliedern und (ii) APPEAR-Stipendiat/innen durchgeführt.

Die Dokumentenanalyse sowie die beiden Umfragen umfassten alle 43 Projekte bzw. deren Teams. Darüber hinaus wurden neun Projekte als Fallstudien ausgewählt und Interviews und Diskussionen mit den beteiligten Projektteams und Stakeholdern geführt. Feldforschung fand vor Ort in Äthiopien und Uganda statt und Projektmitglieder in Nicaragua wurden via Skype® interviewt.

Im Folgenden werden die Ergebnisse nach den drei in der Evaluation untersuchten Ansprüchen an APPEAR-Projekte (d.h. Berücksichtigung von Prinzipien, Ergebnis- und Programmzielorientierung und Erfüllung der OECD/DAC-Kriterien) dargestellt.

APPEAR-Prinzipien

Die Evaluationsergebnisse weisen darauf hin, dass die Mehrzahl der Projekte partizipativ und nachfrageorientiert ist. Das ‚Preparatory Funding‘ und die Möglichkeit für Projektteams im Süden, das Projekt zu koordinieren, sind entscheidend für einen partizipativen Ansatz. Ferner ist festzustellen, dass die Projekte sowohl eine deutliche empirische als auch praktische Ausrichtung aufweisen, wobei sie unterschiedlich stark zur Praxis und externen Stakeholdern wie bspw. Lokale Gemeinschaften

verknüpft sind. Im Hinblick auf einen kulturell offenen Wissensaustausch kann bestätigt werden, dass die meisten Projekte dieses Prinzip in ihrer Projektarbeit operationalisiert haben. Dennoch beinhalten sie laut Projektdokumenten nicht ausreichend Aktivitäten, in denen die österreichischen Universitäten Wissensempfänger sind.

Die Projektteams weisen weiterhin ein gewisses Bewusstsein für die drei zusätzlichen Mehrwert-Aspekte („added values“) auf, die jedoch nicht verpflichtend sind, d.h. Disability Mainstreaming, Anpassung an die OEZA-Länderstrategie und Einbeziehung des wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchses. Deren tatsächliche Umsetzung ist allerdings von Projekt zu Projekt sehr unterschiedlich.

Ergebnisorientierung und Berücksichtigung der Programmziele

Die Antwort auf diese Frage basiert auf der Analyse der Logical Frameworks der Projekte, die nach dem Verständnis des Evaluationsteams die Grundlage für die Ergebnisorientierung und ein wichtiges Planungsinstrument sind. Die Untersuchung der Logical Frameworks weist auf gewisse Schwächen in Bezug auf die Konzeptualisierung der Zielsetzungen (d.h. die Definition von Outputs, Outcomes und Impact) sowie in Bezug auf die Formulierung von Indikatoren (z.B. Nicht-Erfüllung der SMART-Kriterien) hin. Zudem wird das Programmziel oft nicht vollständig im Logical Framework abgebildet. Dabei ist zu beachten, dass Logical Frameworks im APPEAR-Auswahlverfahren nur begrenzt als Ausschlusskriterium diskutiert werden und andere Aspekte im Vordergrund stehen.

Relevanz

Für teilnehmende Institutionen und/oder Fachbereiche

Die Evaluation zeigt auf, dass APPEAR-Projekte von Projektteams, externen Stakeholdern und ADA-Mitarbeiter/innen als relevant angesehen werden. Die Mitglieder der österreichischen Projektteams empfinden das Projekt im Vergleich zu ihren südlichen Kolleg/innen als weniger relevant. Die Studienergebnisse ergeben ferner, dass die thematische Relevanz für österreichische und Institutionen im Süden sehr unterschiedlich sein kann. Während Projekte für Institutionen im Globalen Süden aus entwicklungspolitischer Sicht relevant sind (z.B. wegen des Mangels an gut ausgebildeten Mitarbeiter/innen oder unzureichenden Daten), liegt die Relevanz für österreichische Institutionen eher in neuen Forschungsmöglichkeiten oder der praktischen Anwendung von Forschungsmethoden im Feld begründet.

Für Partnerländer und Endbegünstigten

Nach Angaben von Projektteams und ADA-Mitarbeiter/innen sind APPEAR-Projekte für die Entwicklung der Partnerländer und für die Endbegünstigten relevant. Die Fallstudieninterviews ergeben, dass einige Projekte auf nationale oder regionale Regierungsstrategien ausgerichtet sind und einen innovativen Charakter haben, da sie in einer bestimmten Nische operieren und Aufmerksamkeit auf bestimmte Themen lenken. Die Relevanz für Begünstigte wird in der Online-Befragung und in der Dokumentenanalyse als hoch eingeschätzt. Es gibt jedoch auch Projekte mit starkem Forschungscharakter, bei denen der direkte Nutzen für die Gesellschaft unklar bleibt.

Effektivität

Erreichen der Outputs und Outcomes

Die Evaluation zeigt, dass Projekte generell die wichtigsten Outputs erreichen, jedoch nicht immer rechtzeitig. Ausnahmen (oft ein oder zwei einzelne Aktivitäten, die nicht realisiert werden konnten) wurden ausgewiesen und erklärt. Gründe für die Nichterreicherung sind z.B. Schwierigkeiten der äthiopischen Universitäten die zehn Prozent Vorfinanzierung vor der endgültigen Auszahlung einzuhalten,

ein zu kurzer Zeitrahmen oder fehlendes Engagement externer Akteure. Die Projektteams bewerten die Erzielung der Outcomes als gut, wobei die „Entwicklung individueller Fähigkeiten“, „Steigerung des kulturellen Bewusstseins“ und „gegenseitiger Wissensaustausch“ am besten bewertet werden. Abgeschlossene Projekte bewerten dabei die „Verbesserung der Forschungsqualität“ deutlich geringer als laufende Projekte.

Hauptfaktoren für das Erreichen von Outputs und Outcomes sind (1) Vertrautheit durch regelmäßige persönliche Interaktion sowie häufige Kommunikation, (2) Kontexterfahrung beider Seiten im akademischen Umfeld des Südens bzw. des Nordens und (3) das Netzwerk aus OeAD Stipendiaten als Basis für die Zugehörigkeit und Eigenverantwortung zum Projekt. Als hemmende Faktoren werden (1) externe Faktoren wie politische Turbulenzen und Instabilität, (2) bürokratische Barrieren bei den südlichen Institutionen, die mit den strengen administrativen Anforderungen des APPEAR-Programms kollidieren, und (3) die Fluktuation von Mitarbeitern, die eine nachhaltige Kapazitätsentwicklung gefährdet, ausgemacht.

Einfluss des ‚Preparatory Funding‘

Zwölf der 45 Projekte erhielten ‚Preparatory Funding‘, welches den Aufbau einer engen Zusammenarbeit zwischen den beteiligten Akteuren ermöglichte, was durchweg geschätzt wird. Die Fallstudien zeigen, dass die Möglichkeit, sich vor der Einreichung von Projektvorschlägen persönlich zu treffen, zu tatsächlich partizipativen Ansätzen bei der Projektkonzeption führte, die auch in der Umsetzung beibehalten wurden.

Beitrag der projektgebundenen Stipendiat/innen

Während projektgebundene Stipendien von den Teammitgliedern als sehr wichtig angesehen werden, um Kapazitäten zu entwickeln und neue akademische Netzwerke aufzubauen, variiert ihre Instrumentalisierung von Projekt zu Projekt – insbesondere im Hinblick auf die Einbindung der Stipendiat/innen. Ein Teil der derzeitigen Stipendiat/innen äußert den Wunsch, während ihres Aufenthaltes in Österreich stärker eingebunden zu werden, um mehr Engagement und Eigenverantwortung für das Projekt zeigen zu können, v.a. auch da sie die Projektaktivitäten nach ihrer Rückkehr unterstützen sollen.

Effizienz

Zusammenarbeit

Die Projektteams in Österreich und im Globalen Süden bewerten die Zusammenarbeit als fruchtbar, effektiv und partizipativ. Die Teammitglieder geben an, dass sie Schwierigkeiten angemessen gemeistert haben. Konflikte treten selten auf. Falls diese entstehen, ist eine Vermittlung durch das APPEAR-Team erforderlich und wird auch entsprechend geleistet.

Budgetverteilung

Die Mitglieder des Projektteams zeigen sich zufrieden mit der Budgetvergabe und betonen die Bedeutung der Erhöhung des Budgets (auf 20 %) für Partner aus Nicht-Schwerpunktländern, die Teil der regionalen Partnerschaften sind. Die Projektteams gleichen die ungleiche Budgetverteilung zwischen Schwerpunkt- und Nicht-Schwerpunktländern durch Querfinanzierung über andere Fonds oder Sachleistungen aus.

Kosten-Nutzen-Verhältnis

Mehr als zwei Drittel der Befragten aus den Projektteams schätzen das Kosten-Nutzen-Verhältnis als zufriedenstellend ein. Insbesondere die hohe Motivation der involvierten Projektmitarbeiter/innen trage dazu bei, dass wertvolle Resultate erbracht werden. Der administrative Aufwand wird von einigen jedoch als hoch eingeschätzt, vor allem in Anbetracht vergleichsweise geringer Projektvolumina (im Gegensatz zu anderen geberfinanzierten Projekten). Die Unterstützung und Begleitung durch das APPEAR Office für Verwaltung der Projekte und Stipendien wird jedoch sehr geschätzt.

Wirkung

Erwartete Outcomes und Impacts

Die Projektteams bestätigen, dass APPEAR-Projekte zur Schaffung transnationaler und transkultureller Wissensräume, langfristiger akademischer Partnerschaften und zur Armutsbekämpfung beitragen können. Allerdings geben die Befragten aus abgeschlossenen Projekten in dieser Hinsicht schlechtere Bewertungen ab. Darüber hinaus stellt die Evaluierung die Hypothese auf, dass unter Berücksichtigung von Art und Umfang der APPEAR-Projekte deren Wirksamkeit bei Instituten und Personen am größten ist, die noch keine oder nur wenige andere internationale Kooperationsprojekte durchgeführt haben. Das vergleichsweise geringe Projektvolumen ermöglicht es relativ neuen oder weniger erfahrenen Projektpartner/innen, wertvolle Erfahrungen zu sammeln, und es sichert ihnen ein hohes Maß an Engagement und Eigenverantwortung. Schließlich führt die Vergabe der Projektkoordination im Süden zu weiteren Wirkungen, wie z.B. die Stärkung des Fachbereichs und der beteiligten Personen, die Stärkung der Süd-Süd-Beziehungen (bei mehreren Partnerinstitutionen im Süden) und eine Intensivierung des regionalen Wissensaustausches.

Verbreitung der Projektergebnisse

Mittel zur Verbreitung der Projektergebnisse reichen von herkömmlichen Forschungspublikationen und Büchern über Websites, Social Media, Radio und Fernsehen bis hin zu Stakeholder-Workshops und Summer Schools und Webinaren. Darüber hinaus zeigen die Daten, dass Projekte in hohem Maße neu generiertes Wissen und Daten teilen.

Wahrgenommener Zusammenhang zu den UN-Zielen für nachhaltige Entwicklung (Sustainable Development Goals)

Die Projektteams verbinden ihr Projekt hauptsächlich mit dem SDG 4: *Bildung für alle – inklusive, gerechte und hochwertige Bildung gewährleisten und Möglichkeiten des lebenslangen Lernens für alle fördern*, dem SDG 1: *Armut beenden – Armut in all ihren Formen und überall beenden* und dem SDG 5: *Gleichstellung der Geschlechter – Geschlechtergleichstellung erreichen und alle Frauen und Mädchen zur Selbstbestimmung befähigen*. Die Ergebnisse stimmen mit den Hauptzielen von APPEAR überein und betonen dessen Gender-Mainstreaming-Strategie.

Nachhaltigkeit

Wahrscheinlichkeit des Weiterbestehens der Outcomes

Während die Mehrheit der Projektmitarbeiter/innen angibt, dass Outcomes wahrscheinlich dauerhaft erreicht werden – abgeschlossene Projekte bewerten diesen Aspekt jedoch schlechter als laufende Projekte – deutet die Überprüfung der Dokumente darauf hin, dass Maßnahmen zur Sicherstellung der Nachhaltigkeit nur unzureichend entwickelt sind. In den Partnerinstitutionen steht akademisches und administratives Personal zur Verfügung, um den eingeleiteten Wandel fortzusetzen, aber es fehlen finanzielle Mittel. Die Nachhaltigkeit der Projektergebnisse für die Endbegünstigten ist

insbesondere bei forschungsorientierten Projekten nicht gewährleistet, wenn deren Fortführung von externen Akteuren abhängt, die entsprechende Anpassungen auf Grundlage der Forschungsergebnisse vornehmen müssen.

Einbeziehung von Kapazitäten und Leistungen und Anwendung von Wissen

Die Umfrage zeigt, dass die Partner/innen im Süden die Projekt-Outcomes (z.B. in der Forschung, in der Lehre und bei der Stärkung der Curricula) stärker genutzt haben als die österreichischen Partner/innen, wobei der Unterschied statistisch signifikant ist. Begünstigende Faktoren für die Nachhaltigkeit von Projektmaßnahmen sind die ständige Einbeziehung lokaler Akteure in den Projektprozess, die Formalisierung von Partnerschaften durch MoUs und die erfolgreiche Wiedereingliederung von Stipendiat/innen nach erfolgreichem Abschluss des Studiums, unterstützt durch vertragliche Vereinbarungen zwischen Stipendiat/innen und ihren Heimatuniversitäten. Nach Projektende erweist sich weiterhin eine Online- oder physische Plattform zur Fortführung und Verbesserung der projektbezogenen Aktivitäten von Vorteil, um die im Rahmen der Partnerschaften initiierten Veränderungen aufrechtzuerhalten.

Gender

Gleicher Beitrag von Frauen und Männern zur Projektdurchführung

Bei der Betrachtung der Verteilung der Geschlechter fällt auf, dass es wesentlich mehr männliche als weibliche Projektkoordinatoren gibt. Dabei werden 44 % der Projekte von österreichischen Männern koordiniert. Qualitative Daten zeigen, dass bei der Projektdurchführung vor Ort hingegen versucht wird, Männer und Frauen gleichberechtigt zu integrieren, z.B. durch den Aufbau eines geschlechtsparitätisch besetzten Trainerteams.

Gender Mainstreaming, Sensibilisierung für Genderfragen, veränderte Einstellungen zu Genderfragen

Gender wird als wichtige analytische Kategorie in der Forschung hervorgehoben, wobei 62 % der Befragten angeben, dass das Thema in ihren APPEAR Forschungsvorhaben integriert ist. Der Anteil der Stipendiat/innen, die Geschlechterfragen in ihre Dissertation integrieren, ist deutlich geringer; 22 % integrieren dies kaum oder gar nicht. 63 % der Befragten (projektgebundener Stipendiat/innen) geben an, dass Gender-Fragen Teil ihres Studiums / ihrer Ausbildung in Österreich und im Heimatland waren.

Die Evaluationsergebnisse weisen weiterhin darauf hin, dass Gender Mainstreaming je nach Projekt, Disziplin und Region einen unterschiedlichen Stellenwert hat. Während das Thema in den meisten Projekten der Sozial- und Bildungswissenschaften durchgängig verankert ist, mangelt es in einigen Projekten in technischen Disziplinen an einem fundierten Verständnis. Schließlich belegen die Fallstudien, dass Lernprozesse zu Gender-Themen während des Projektzyklus stattfinden und entsprechende Vorschläge in die Praxis umgesetzt werden.

Empfehlungen auf Projektebene (an Projektmitarbeiter/innen gerichtet)

Laufende Projekte

Empfehlung 1: Externe Stakeholder, wie z.B. Regierungsmitarbeiter/innen, NGOs, Gemeindevorstände u.a., sollten so weit wie möglich in Projektaktivitäten einbezogen werden, da gerade sie einmal initiierte Veränderungen auf gesellschaftlicher Ebene weiterführen können. Hierfür sollten die den Projekten zugrundeliegenden, z.T. sehr abstrakten Konzepte und Theorien der beteiligten Forscher/innen greifbar gemacht und in allgemeinverständliches Wissen übersetzt werden. Damit wird

sichergestellt, dass in den Workshops und Beratungen durch die Beteiligten dieses Wissen weitervermittelt werden kann.

Empfehlung 2: In einigen Projekten bleibt unklar, ob Forschungsergebnisse, Handbücher und andere Endprodukte tatsächlich genutzt bzw. umgesetzt werden. Projektteams sollten daher auf kontextualisierte Ansätze zurückgreifen, um Projektergebnisse und ihr Wissen auszutauschen. Gerade im globalen Süden, wo oft über Smartphones auf das Internet zugegriffen wird, bieten neue Kommunikationsmittel wie bspw. Social Media, aber auch Webinare und Massive Open Online Courses Potenzial für die Ansprache weiterer Zielgruppen. Darüber hinaus könnte der Einsatz von IKT-Lösungen wie etwa mobiles Monitoring geprüft werden. Entwicklung als zentrales Ziel der Projekte sollte auch bei den beteiligten österreichischen Partnern/innen im Vordergrund stehen. Projekte sollten nicht primär als Finanzierungsquellen für Veröffentlichungen gesehen werden. Projektteams in Österreich sollten sich gleichermaßen in ihrem Kontext für ihre Sache einsetzen und angemessene Ansätze zur Verbreitung von Projektwissen und -ergebnissen entwickeln. Vortragsreihen, öffentliche Stakeholder-Symposien, Zeitungsartikel oder Advocacy-Maßnahmen, wie sie in mehreren Projekten identifiziert wurden, könnten projektübergreifend repliziert werden. Schließlich sollten sich APPEAR-Projekte bei der Verbreitung von Informationen dem Diskurs über die Ziele der nachhaltigen Entwicklung anschließen und ihre Verbindungen mit den 17 Zielen ermitteln.

Empfehlung 3: Ein Teil der projektgebundenen Stipendiat/innen äußerte den Wunsch, häufiger über Projektaktivitäten informiert zu werden. Projektteams sollten daher versuchen, die aktuellen Studierenden so weit wie möglich zu informieren und einzubeziehen, um ihre Eigenverantwortung für das Projekt zu erhöhen. Mittel zur Information der Stipendiat/innen umfassen (i) Aufnahme in die E-Mail-Liste, (ii) Teilnahme an Konferenzen, Workshops und Symposien, (iii) Einrichtung einer WhatsApp-Gruppe, um u.a. Updates aus der Feldarbeit auszutauschen.

Zukünftige Projekte

Empfehlung 4: Projektteams sollten bereits in der Beantragungsphase Zeit und Ressourcen für die Ausarbeitung einer detaillierten Exit-Strategie, d.h. langfristige Finanzierungsmöglichkeiten und/oder Übernahme der Projektaktivitäten von Zielgruppe oder Begünstigten für ihr Projekt einsetzen. In einigen Fällen kann hierfür eine externe Unterstützung und Beratung sinnvoll sein, die entsprechend bereits bei der Budgetplanung zu berücksichtigen ist.

Empfehlungen 5: Entwurf eines Logical Frameworks (oder eines ähnlichen Tools), welches realistisch angewendet werden kann und Entwicklung von SMARTen Indikatoren¹. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit sollte den Indikatoren auf der Outcome-Ebene geschenkt werden. Es wird empfohlen, auch (Lern-) Ziele für die jeweilige österreichische Institution zu definieren, um den Aspekt des gegenseitigen Wissensaustauschs weiter zu stärken. Weiterhin sollte Zeit für Peer-Learning über ergebnisorientiertes Projektmanagement eingeplant werden. Insbesondere unerfahrenen Teammitgliedern sollte der Nutzen von Logical Frameworks und verwandten Werkzeugen verdeutlicht werden.

Empfehlung auf Programmebene (an OeAD/ADA gerichtet)

Empfehlung 6: Förderung der Kommunikation und des Austauschs zwischen den Projekten. Erkenntnisse aus Gender Mainstreaming-Projekten, ergebnisorientiertem Projektmanagement oder Maßnahmen zur Integration der lokalen Gemeinschaften sollten unter den Projektteams breit gestreut werden, um auf den gemachten Erfahrungen aufzubauen. OeAD bietet umfassende Informationen

¹ Indikatoren sollten **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic** und **Timebound** (spezifisch, messbar, akzeptiert, realistisch und terminierbar) sein.

auf ihrer Website durch Blogposts und Podcasts und erstellt Projektpräsentationen. Darüber hinaus könnten regionale, informellere Foren eingerichtet werden, in denen Herausforderungen diskutiert und gemeinsame Lösungen erörtert werden können.

Empfehlung 7: Um das Alumni-Netzwerk OeAD/APPEAR weiter zu unterstützen, sollten sowohl Online- als auch physische Alumni-Plattformen eingerichtet werden, um den kontinuierlichen Wissens- und Erfahrungsaustausch zu fördern. Plattformen für Alumni und Kooperationsprojekte im Rahmen des APPEAR Programms stellen eher noch die Ausnahme dar, wenn man bedenkt, dass andere Geber viel mehr Mittel für Kooperations- und Mobilitätsprojekte ausgeben. Der OeAD sollte die engen Verbindungen zwischen den Alumni nutzen und die Umsetzung weiterer Initiativen unterstützen. So könnten beispielsweise thematisch ausgerichtete Workshops von Alumni auf Antrag gefördert werden.

Empfehlung 8: Der Zweck des Logical Frameworks muss erneut geprüft werden und alternative Werkzeuge, zur leichteren Darstellung der durch das Projekt ausgelösten Veränderungen, könnten in Betracht gezogen werden. Wenn das Instrument des Logical Framework beibehalten wird, wird dringend empfohlen, (i) die verwendete Terminologie zu überprüfen, (ii) eine klarere Trennung von Output, Outcomes und Wirkung anzustreben und (iii) seine Anwendung unter den Projektteams zu fördern.

Empfehlung 9: Erhaltung und Erweiterung der beiden APPEAR-internen Mechanismen des ‚Preparatory Funding‘ und der Möglichkeit der Projektkoordination durch die Süd-Partner, um eine hohe Beteiligung und Eigenverantwortung aller beteiligten Akteure zu erreichen. Ferner sollte eruiert werden, ob die Koordinierung von AAPs im Süden verbindlich eingeführt werden könnte. Angesichts der Erfolgsgeschichten aus anderen Projekten scheinen AAPs geeignet, die Hauptverantwortung an die Institutionen im Süden weiterzugeben, um die oben genannten weiteren Wirkungen hervorzurufen.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Center for Evaluation (CEval) was mandated by the Austrian Agency for International Mobility and Cooperation in Education, Science and Research (OeAD GmbH) to evaluate projects from the Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development (APPEAR). APPEAR is conceived, guided and financed by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) to support Higher Education and Research for Development in the priority regions of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) and is implemented by OeAD.

The APPEAR programme can be divided into two phases: APPEAR I was running from 2010 to 2014 and APPEAR II started in 2015 with prospective ending in 2020. The respective calls for application have been published and disseminated approximately one year before a possible project start. The programme is set up of two components. Component (1) focuses on (i) academic partnerships (AP), (ii) advanced academic partnerships (AAP; only APPEAR II) and (iii) Preparatory Funding, and component (2) enables project-bound scholarships for Master and PhD studies and individual scholarships for PhD studies (independent from projects) in Austria.

By means of **academic partnerships** (also referred to as ‘projects’) APPEAR aims to improve the general standards in higher education, research and management through professionals and higher education institutions by sharing their knowledge and experiences and designing innovative projects. The achievement of these objectives should finally contribute to effective and sustainable reduction of poverty in the partner countries and support the achievement of development goals according to the national/regional strategies and the overall ADC objective. **Preparatory funding** shall support institutions that do not yet have well established links to jointly plan and elaborate a project proposal. Funding for **advanced academic partnerships (AAP)** is granted, based on an already successfully finalised academic partnership to build upon results achieved. **Project-bound scholarships** support student mobility and are of additional support for capacity development in the home institutions of priority countries. According to the guidelines for applicants “Master’s and PhD scholarships will support students and academics from already existing partnerships to implement sustainable cooperation and to implement the programme’s overall objective”.²

During APPEAR I four calls were issued between 2010 and 2013. A total of **21 projects** received funding for two to three years between 2011 and 2015. Based on learnings gained during APPEAR I, APPEAR II adapted its logical framework and defined four more objectives to be achieved. These comprise (i) adapting the programme according to lessons learned from APPEAR I, (ii) raising awareness for the APPEAR programme and development relevant topics in education, science and research, (iii) implementing measures and processes for quality assurance and (iv) facilitating a dialog with donors, implementing organisations and other institutions for a critical reflection of procedures and impacts of the funded programmes. Since 2015 three more calls were issued for APPEAR II and a total of **22 projects** received funding for two to four years. During the fifth, sixth and seventh call of the APPEAR programme, funding was also provided for AAPs to continue and extend successfully accomplished

² See guidelines for applicants 2011-2017

partnerships. Since 2009 the APPEAR Selection Board selected **43 academic partnership projects** out of which 18 are already completed and 25 projects are ongoing. Six projects comprise **AAPs**³.

The total budget of APPEAR I was approximately **9 million Euros** with 70 % being spent on AP and Preparatory Funding and 30 % being reserved for scholarships. APPEAR II has a budget of **12 million Euros** with 75 % of funds spent on AP, AAP and Preparatory Funding and 25 % being issued for scholarships. From the beginning of its second implementation phase in 2014, the World University Service (WUS) Austria supports the programme.

1.2 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

According to ADA guidelines, all projects and programmes must be evaluated at least once during their implementation. While a mid-term evaluation of APPEAR I at programme-level took place in 2013, the APPEAR project evaluation at hand, aiming at assessing on-going and completed projects of APPEAR I and II, is the first of its kind.

As referred to in the Terms of Reference (ToR) this evaluation shall i) identify strengths, weaknesses and challenges during the implementation of the projects and ii) present recommendations for the remaining duration of projects assessed or future similar projects. While main users of the evaluation are OeAD and ADA representatives, the evaluation exercise should also be useful for project teams to improve current or future initiatives in higher education cooperation. Eventually, evaluation results should add to the basis of the second evaluation at programme level, which is envisaged for 2019.

In the evaluation at hand, three major claims are analysed:

- ✓ APPEAR projects consider the programme's guidelines and principles
- ✓ APPEAR projects are results-oriented and contribute to the objectives of the programme
- ✓ APPEAR projects are relevant, effective, efficient, sustainable and have educational, institutional and societal impact.

The evaluation thus provides insights about projects' adherence to the programme guidelines and basic principles and assesses their goal achievement and overall performance according to the OECD/DAC criteria. Specific evaluation questions have been provided in the ToR, which guide the evaluation and structure the report. While integrating all 43 APPEAR projects implemented till now, the study includes nine case studies of projects located in Ethiopia, Uganda and Nicaragua. Field visits and research in Austria, Ethiopia and Uganda took place between May and June 2018 and projects in Nicaragua were included via Skype interviews. An external evaluation team of CEval consisting of three team members (two being female and one being male) conducted this evaluation.

The evaluation report is structured as follows: Chapter 1 describes the background of the APPEAR Programme and elaborates on the purpose and objectives of the evaluation. Chapter 2 describes the evaluation methodology, including the general design and specific methods applied for data collection and analysis. Furthermore, sample and scope of the evaluation as well as nine case studies are presented and limitations of the study are outlined. Chapter 3 provides findings on each case considering the guiding principles and alignment with the APPEAR programme objectives as well as the OECD/DAC criteria. Chapter 4 elaborates on conclusions and recommendations.

³ Project duration of academic partnerships or advanced academic partnerships were – depending on the different calls – at maximum four years, but often less. The Preparatory Funding was open during four calls and could cover between max. four and max. six months. The Master and PhD scholarships have had an average length of 24 and 36 months, respectively.

2. Evaluation Methodology

2.1 Evaluation Approach

The evaluation is **theory-based**, meaning that assumptions about causal inferences between the measures undertaken in the APPEAR programme and the observable institutional capacities in education, research and management in the priority countries of the ADC and its contribution to effective and sustainable reduction of poverty are scrutinised and finally validated on grounds of the logical frameworks developed in each project. The project documents do not provide Theory of Change (ToC) with a clear separation between input, output, outcome and impact and an analysis of their interlinkages. Therefore, the evaluation team presents an exemplary ToC to be used for the analysis (see chapter 3.2).

The evaluation follows a **multi-method approach** that makes use of primary and secondary data sources as well as qualitative and quantitative data. Different data sources (e.g. project documents, partner staff) were combined with different data collection methods and analysis procedures (see next section). Whenever possible, data sources were triangulated to validate findings. Moreover, insights from one data collection instrument were complemented by insights from other instruments. Beyond data triangulation, a mix of qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods was applied to enhance reliability and objectivity of results. To diminish researcher biases and enhance traceability of results, findings of the evaluation were reviewed by a researcher who had not directly been involved in the data collection process.

In a first step an analysis grid was developed to guide data collection and analysis (see Annex 5.1). The analysis grid also served as a basis for the development of data collection instruments, data analysis methods, as well as for structuring evaluation results.

2.2 Data Collection Methods and Data Analysis

The evaluation drew on both primary and secondary data sources. **Secondary data** comprised APPEAR programme documents (logical framework of APPEAR I and II, the guidelines for applicants call 2-7, the gender strategy of APPEAR I and II, the disability mainstreaming manual of APPEAR II, the budget guidelines and the feedback summary of the final reports of APPEAR I). Available materials were both included in the systematic document review and informed the design of data collection instruments.

The **systematic document review** comprised project applications, annual reports, final reports, application reviews and monitoring visits' documentation of all 43 APPEAR projects. Following a three-step approach, firstly analytical categories were elaborated on the basis of the analysis grid, representing individual indicators. These indicators were structured according to the three evaluation claims (i.e. adherence with ADC principles, results-orientation and OECD/DAC criteria) and transferred into an analysis software called MaxQDA®. Secondly, all documents were then reviewed by flagging relevant text fragments with unique identifiers that provide reference to one or more categories. Thirdly, on the basis of project-specific text fragments found, the respective indicator was then rated either on a binary scale on a four-step scale whenever possible (i.e. quantitative).

Primary data collection was implemented via complementing instruments, which comprise

- ✓ In-depth interviews,
- ✓ On-site observation,

- ✓ Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
- ✓ Online surveys

In-depth interviews were set up at two levels. On the one hand, OeAD APPEAR programme staff as well as ADA and MFA staff involved in the development and steering of APPEAR were approached and interviewed. On the other hand, in-depth interviews were conducted with APPEAR project coordinators and project team members in both Austria and in countries of the Global South. The interviews were conducted in person or via Skype® following semi-structured interview guidelines which were developed according to the analysis grid. **On-site observations** (i.e. at research institutions, training centres, stakeholder institutions, among others) complemented the field visits and were thoroughly documented.

In Austria, one **FGD** was conducted with current project-bound scholarship holders, following semi-structured guidelines as outlined in the inception report. Former project-bound scholarship holders were included during the field visits in one-to-one interviews.

Further, quantitative data was collected by means of an **online survey** addressed to project team members of all 43 projects, aiming at achieving maximum representativeness. A second full population survey was sent to all former and current scholarship recipients. Local ADC staff from other countries were consulted by means of a **short qualitative questionnaire** sent by email.

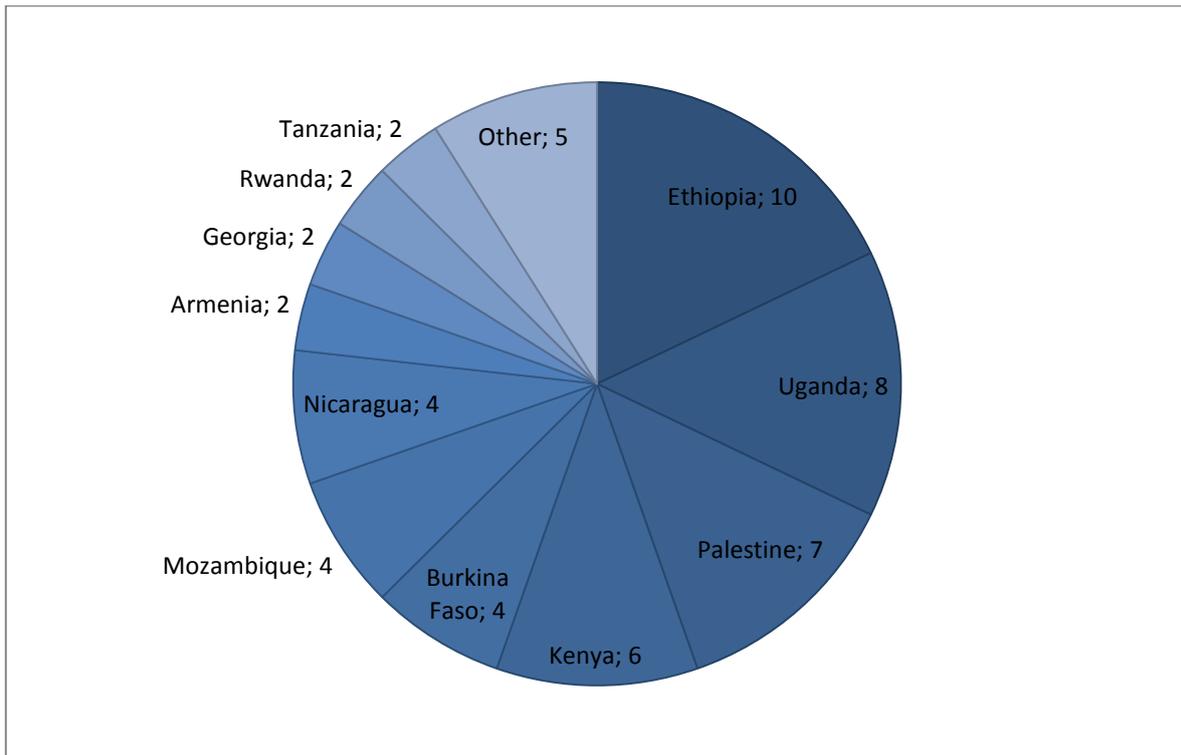
Qualitative data underwent qualitative content analysis while quantitative data was analysed by applying descriptive statistics. The questionnaires were mostly analysed descriptively by calculating key parameters such as mean values or standard deviations. Secondary sources (i.e. the documents, interview transcripts and qualitative data from the surveys) were subject to a primarily qualitative analysis. Yet, quantifications were undertaken wherever applicable.

2.3 Sample, Scope and Case Studies

2.3.1 Overview of projects

The following section explores the underlying sample of APPEAR projects. Figure 1 shows the distribution of APPEAR projects at academic institutions across different partner countries. Ethiopia has been involved in ten projects, Uganda in eight, Palestine in seven and Kenya in six projects. Burkina Faso, Mozambique and Nicaragua were partner countries in four projects, Armenia, Georgia, Rwanda and Tanzania were partner countries in two and Burundi, El Salvador, Nepal, Peru und Senegal partner in one project. In Austria, 18 out of 43 projects were located at the BOKU university, followed by Vienna University of Technology (7 projects) and University of Vienna (5 projects).

Figure 1: Cooperation countries of projects⁴



So far, 18 projects (i.e. 42 %) have been completed and 25 of the projects (i.e. 58 %) are ongoing (see Figure 2). 24 projects have had a duration of three years, eight took two years, seven took four years and four ran for two and a half years (see Figure 3).

Figure 2: Distribution of projects by project status

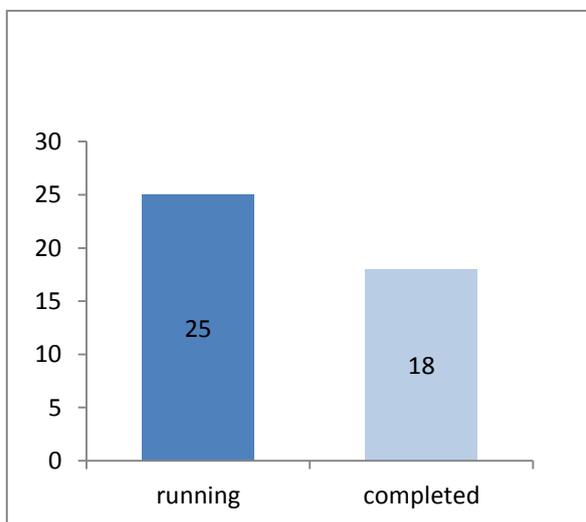
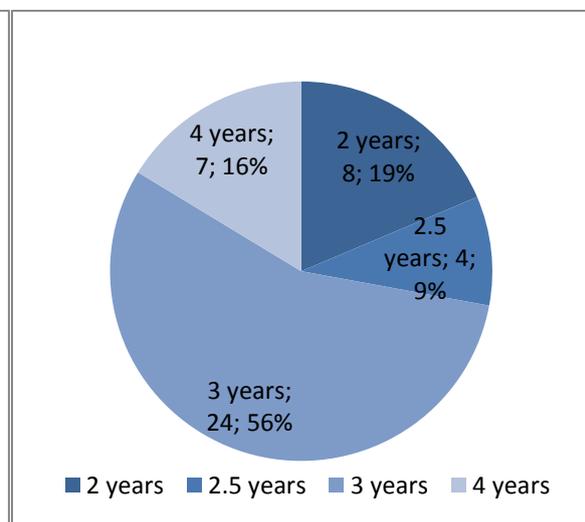


Figure 3: Distribution by Project duration



2.3.2 Case Studies

Nine case study projects were pre-selected by OeAD and ADA. Selection criteria included (i) information about the density of project partners in the region, (ii) differences in organisational conditions and (iii) socio-cultural backgrounds. An overview of case studies is given in Table 1. The chosen case studies comprise: (i) TRANSACT, (ii) PROSOWO, (iii) RESPOND HER, (iv) BIOREM, (v) Project 99,

⁴ Total number of projects participations of partner countries (56) is higher than total project number (43) because in seven projects institutions from several partner countries participate.

(vi) STRECAFISH, (vii) PROSOWO II, (viii) CapNex, and (ix) AAP INEDIS. While TRANSACT, PROSOWO, RESPOND HER, and BIOREM were part of APPEAR I, Project 99, STRECAFISH, PROSOWO II, CapNex, and INEDIS are funded under APPEAR II. PROSOWO II as well as INEDIS are follow-up projects of PROSOWO respectively RESPOND HER and received funding under the AAP programme scheme. Case study projects are located across nine countries, i.e. Austria, Ethiopia, Kenya, Peru, Nicaragua, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania. Field research took place in Ethiopia and Uganda, while projects in Nicaragua were included through Skype interviews.

Table 1: Case studies

Acronym	Partner countries	Programme phase	Project status	No of Interviews
TRANSACT	Ethiopia	APPEAR I	completed	8
PROSOWO	Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Ruanda	APPEAR I	completed	5*
PROSOWO II (AAP PROSOWO)	Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Ruanda, Burundi	APPEAR II	ongoing	
RESPOND HER	Ethiopia	APPEAR I	completed	8*
INEDIS (AAP RESPOND HER)	Ethiopia	APPEAR II	ongoing	8*
BIOREM	Nicaragua, Peru	APPEAR I	completed	2
Project 99	Nicaragua	APPEAR II	ongoing	2
STRECAFISH	Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya	APPEAR II	ongoing	9
CapNex	Uganda, Kenya	APPEAR II	ongoing	8
OeAD, ADA, MFA	Austria	//	//	6
TOTAL				48**

* Interviews for AAP and their predecessors were conducted jointly, emphasising the need for interview partners to elaborate on both projects separately. While PROSOWO I/II built closely on one another, RESPOND HER / INEDIS show differences in terms of team composition and thematical focus. Conclusively, findings of the latter will be reported separately, while findings on PROSOWO I/II will be reported jointly.

** The list of persons interviewed can be found in annex 5.6.

Eventually, a brief synopsis of each case study is given below.

TRANSACT

The APPEAR Project “Strengthening Rural Transformation Competences of Higher Education and Research Institutions in the Amhara Region, Ethiopia (TRANSACT)” started in February 2011 and ended in July 2014. The Austrian project lead was located at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU) and jointly implemented with partner institutions in Ethiopia, namely the University of Gondar (UoG), the Bahir Dar University (BDU), the Amhara Region Agricultural Research Institute (ARARI) and associate partners. The main objective was to build capacity in rural transformation of higher education (HE) and research institutions (RI) to respond more effectively to transformation opportunities among farmers in complex and risk-prone rural areas in the Amhara Region.

PROSOWO I / PROSOWO II

The APPEAR project “Promotion of Professional Social Work towards Social Development and Poverty Reduction in East Africa (PROSOWO)” was implemented by the Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, Austria, together with Makerere University, Uganda, the University of Nairobi, Kenya, the Institute of Social Work, Tanzania and the University of Rwanda. The project began in March 2011 and ended in November 2014. The overall objective was to promote professional social work (SW) education and practice to more effectively contribute towards social development and poverty reduction. The AAP PROSOWO II “Professional Social Work in East Africa - Towards Sustainable Impact” runs from January 2016 to December 2018 and focuses on indigenous methods in SW. Hope Africa University, Burundi joined the AAP.

RESPOND HER / AAP INEDIS

The APPEAR project “Responding to Poverty and Disability through Higher Education and Research (RESPOND-HER)” was coordinated by the University of Vienna in collaboration with Addis Ababa University (AAU, Ethiopia). The project focused on the educational and employment situation of persons with disabilities (PwD) and ran from October 2011 to December 2014. The AAP INEDIS-project stands for “Inclusion in Education for Persons with Disabilities” and has started in March 2017. Now led by AAU new partnerships were set up with Dilla University, Ethiopia, and the UoG, Ethiopia. The project focuses on capacity development at HE institutions to facilitate inclusive education for students with disabilities (SwD) with a special focus on gender and disability. INEDIS is anticipated to end in February 2020.

BIOREM

The APPEAR project “Bioremediation of Contaminated Sites – Research and Education (BIOREM)” was a partnership project between the UV and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua (UNAN, Nicaragua), Universidad Nacional Santiago Antunez de Mayolo (UNASAM, Peru), and the Austrian environmental company GeoRisk Environmental Services GmbH. Running from August 2011 to September 2014, the overall goal was to strengthen capacities in bioremediation of toxic soil contaminated by heavy metals.

Project 99

Project 99 - “Strengthening of local Research Capacities at the Bluefields Indian and Caribbean University, Nicaragua to confront the effects of Climate Change” is a collaborative project between the Bluefields Indian and Caribbean University (BICU) in Nicaragua and BOKU in Austria. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the establishment of BICU as an institution of reference on climate change research with high technical and scientific capacity to support the implementation of the national and regional climate change strategy at the Southern Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua. The project started in January 2015.

STRECAFISH

The project “Strengthening regional capacity in research and training in fisheries and aquaculture for improved food security and livelihoods in Eastern Africa (STRECAFISH)” is an APPEAR partnership project, led by Makerere University (MU, Uganda). The project involves BOKU, the University of Eldoret (UoE, Kenya), the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) and associate partners. The STRECAFISH-Project seeks to address human capacity shortages in Eastern African fisheries. Its overall objective is to build capacity in higher education towards an improved response of education to the fast-moving aquaculture and fisheries industry. The project runs from July 2015 until June 2018.

CapNex

The APPEAR Project “Capacity building on the water-energy-food security (WEF) nexus through research and training in Kenya and Uganda (CapNex)” is a partnership project between the coordinating organisation Technische Universität Wien (TUW, Austria) and MU, Uganda, the Technical University of Kenya (TUK, Kenya), and BOKU. Running from January 2017 until December 2019, its overall goal is to address the increasing pressure on local resources in the border region between Kenya and Uganda by building capacities on mitigation measures which address agricultural, environmental, hydrological and socio-economic aspects of the larger WEF nexus.

2.3.3 Online Surveys

Quantitative data was collected by means of two online surveys being directed at (i) project team members of the 43 partnerships and (ii) at current or former project-bound scholarship holders.

The survey addressing project team members was answered by 78 out of 150⁵ persons, leading to a response rate of 53 %. 65 % of the respondents are male and 35 % female. Remarkably, the share of respondents from Austria (53 %) and partner countries (47 %) is quite balanced. The three partner countries represented most are Ethiopia, Palestine and Uganda, which corresponds to the distribution of projects. Answers from Burundi, Peru and Nepal and El Salvador could not be retrieved.

About half of the respondents are project staff (41 of 78, 53 %) and the other half project coordinators (37 of 78, 47 %). Most of respondents are part of projects, which are still running (60 of 78, 77 %), whereas 18 persons shared answers on already completed projects (18 of 78, 23 %). This means that considerably less responses from already completed projects could be retrieved, although they represent almost half of the projects. This imbalance can most likely be explained by decreasing connection to a project once it ended, so that former project staff of completed projects, might feel less motivated to participate in a data collection. Within the group of respondents from completed projects there is a high share of respondents from Austria, which needs to be taken into account when analysing answers for the subgroups ‘completed’ and ‘ongoing’ projects. The evaluation team always checked if the higher number of Austrian respondents led to a bias in results which could mostly be rejected. Similarly, the survey achieved a high response rate from AAP team members (40 of 78, 51 %), even though AAP projects (6) represent less than 14 % in total.

For the survey of project-bound scholarship holders, a response rate of 77 % could be achieved with 44 out of 57 APPEAR scholars sharing their answers. Thirty-six percent female (16) and 64 % (28) males participated in the survey. Most respondents are from Ethiopia (25 %, 11), Kenya (14 %, 6), Palestine (14 %, 6), Uganda (14 %, 6) and Burkina Faso (11 %, 5). Seventy-seven percent of the re-

⁵ Project applications revealed 140 team members involved in the projects. However, in the course of the interviews additional persons deeply involved in the projects were mentioned and added to the survey to share their views, adding up to 150 persons in total.

spondents (34) are/were involved in PhD Studies and 23 % in Master's programmes (10). Furthermore, 77% of the students (34) already finished their studies and 23 % (10) are still enrolled.

2.4 Limitations of the Evaluation

Limitations of evaluation approach

L1: Programme evaluation vs. project evaluation

The evaluation at hand shall have a clear project-level focus aiming at assessing the 43 APPEAR projects included in phase I and II of the programme. The nature of the evaluation, examining all projects of the programme in one single evaluation, however, entails certain aspects that are relevant at programme-level. Thus, it was not always feasible for interviewees to distinguish between the two different level. The evaluation team and the APPEAR Office when informing the project partners for the sample and the online survey put high emphasis on clarifying the purpose of the evaluation with all interviewees involved in order to maintain the perspective at project level.

Limitations of data sources

L2: Insufficient inclusion of beneficiaries (i.e. students, community)

The evaluation team encountered several limitations in including final beneficiaries. Firstly, the budget and time frame of the evaluation did not allow for intensive field visits to reach out to community members who potentially benefitted from projects. Secondly, at several universities students were either in their examination phase or on holidays and thus unavailable. Nevertheless, a few interviews could be set up with students at both Ethiopian and Ugandan universities. Because of this insufficient inclusion only limited information has been collected and can be used in the analysis. Therefore, it should be interpreted with caution as representativeness is not given.

Limitations of data collection methods

L4: Limitations of a document review

The document review provides the opportunity to get information for all 43 projects. Furthermore, this information is quite similarly structured which enabled a quantitative analysis. Nevertheless, it is not possible to assess projects only on the basis of documents as they solely contain reported information, which do not necessarily reflect all relevant activities, measures or considerations (etc.). Accordingly, the data gathered from the document review was carefully triangulated with other information sources.

L5: Virtual interviews vs. field visits in case studies (no field visit in Nicaragua)

The evaluation budget and time-frame did not allow for personal field visits in Nicaragua. Thus, key project team members were interviewed via Skype. Drawbacks of the same lie in lack of opportunities to conduct participatory observations as well as in potential barriers set through distance and internet functionality. Interviews with Nicaraguan partners were conducted in Spanish to avoid additional linguistic barriers to the best extent possible.

Limitations of sample

L6: Selection of case study projects

The evaluation team did not participate in the selection of projects but was informed about the selection criteria (see chapter 2.3.2). While representativeness of projects cannot be ensured, the case study sample appears to cover a diverse range of projects in terms of (i) point of completion, (ii) context, (iii) coordinating institution and (iv) type of partnership, among others.

L7: Political situation of countries in Global South

The internal objective to conduct at least five interviews per project could not be achieved for partnership projects with Nicaraguan institutes. Currently, the country undergoes political instability which affected access to the internet and accordingly the integration of Nicaraguan project partners.

3. Findings

3.1 Consideration of guiding principles and alignment with programme objectives

The following section examines the fulfilment of guiding principles and added-value principles, and explores the alignment of the projects with the programme objectives. Findings are mainly based on results from the document review and case study interviews.

3.1.1 Do APPEAR projects consider the programme's guidelines and principles?

Each call for applications of APPEAR projects includes essential requirements for applicants. While from call to call some changes regarding the shared information occurred, five basic principles are inherent to the programme:

- ✓ Participatory approach
- ✓ A concept of culturally open-minded knowledge
- ✓ Practically- and empirically-oriented approach
- ✓ Gender sensitivity
- ✓ "Bottom-up" and demand-driven approach

- ✓ Participatory approach

The first principle refers to participatory approaches in project design and implementation and well-balanced ownership between the partners⁶. Specifically, the calls elaborate that "the participatory approach of APPEAR means that project proposals should be planned and worked out jointly by the proposing partners of the main cooperating institutions."⁷

When analysing the applications, evidence for a joint elaboration of the project proposal is found in 22 out of 43 project applications (51 %). In the other half of project applications, information on the collaboration with respect to the proposal development is not found. Although this might point to a lower importance of jointly elaborating the application, a participatory approach might have still been followed but was not communicated in the application documents provided.

According to case studies, two factors facilitate a joint elaboration of proposal documents. On the one hand, evidence was found that Preparatory Funding strongly supports eye-to-eye collaboration at the beginning of the partnership (e.g. in PROSOWO), as it allows to set up intensive kick-off meetings (for further details see chapter 3.4). On the other hand, the option for Southern project team members to coordinate the project and show leadership further catalyses participation of all partners involved (e.g. INEDIS, STRECAFISH).

Even though a joint preparation of the proposal is the basis for participatory project implementation, the principle on participation should go beyond proposal stage and also refer to a participatory collaboration of institutions involved over the course of the projects. Supporting and impeding factors of collaborations are further analysed in the efficiency chapter.

⁶ Ownership will be analysed in-depth in chapter 3.7 on sustainability.

⁷ See Guidelines for applicants 2010-2017

✓ A concept of culturally open-minded knowledge

The second basic principle focuses on *“an open-minded concept of knowledge, science and empirical research, [since] APPEAR is not interested in one-sided ‘knowledge transfer’, usually prolonging the predominance – which is often seen as arrogance – of ‘western science’ and ‘western interests’.”*

The application documents were analysed with respect to knowledge exchange in contrast to one-sided knowledge transfer. Even though, the general concept of APPEAR projects is that the institutional capacities in the South are strengthened⁸, the evaluators were interested to which extent also the Austrian institutions were expected to benefit from the project. Many documents include very general statements about benefits for all participating institutions or for Austrian institutions. In terms of the latter often only intercultural gains are articulated. Logical frameworks were analysed to search for expected results or objectives referring to either all institutions or especially the Austrian institutions benefiting from the project. 27 of 43 projects (63 %) refer to a knowledge exchange between institutions within their logical frameworks. Only 11 of these 27 refer in their results or objectives of the logical framework to Austrian institutions. Therefore, a mutual culturally open-minded knowledge transfer, as foreseen by APPEAR, is not explicitly articulated by the majority of projects (11 of 42, 26 %). Nevertheless, evidence was found in case studies showing that South-North knowledge transfer indeed occurs in several projects – especially in projects of Social Sciences. The specific example below is taken from the PROSOWO project and narrates the following:

“One example is the African philosophy of “ubuntu”, which says that all humans are interlinked. This idea is borrowed from Africa and recognises strengths and resilience of individuals. It can be excellently applied in current work with migrants in Europe to not see what they are lacking, but what strengths they already have. There was a former staff of the project who is now working with refugees in Germany and she makes a big difference thanks to the experiences she gained in Africa.

- Project staff, PROSOWO

✓ Practically- and empirically-oriented approach

The guidelines for applicants do not further define the principle of following a practically⁹ and empirically oriented approach. Subsequently, the two aspects shall be analysed separately. It was found that empirical data collection and research is directly or indirectly inherent to every project. From the evaluators' point of view it would be unjust to assess projects that directly include field research in the activities better than project that develop / revise an innovative Master's programme leading to many students conducted practical research in the field. Thus, the research team refrains here from applying a document analysis. From the case studies it can also be confirmed that empirical research is part of all projects examined. The majority of interview partners mentioned the importance of development research to generate new data, and to understand needs and requirements better. For the practical orientation, logical frameworks¹⁰ were examined in respect to linkages to practice like

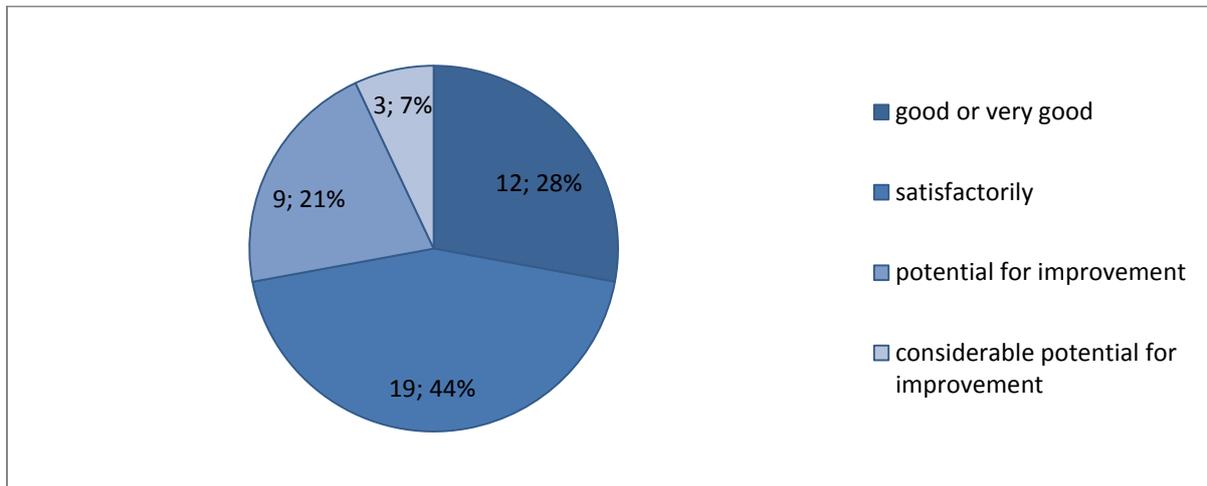
⁸ Furthermore, to that the projects should respond to the identified needs and demands in the South countries and institutions in particular and the demand should be formulated by the partners in the South.

⁹ The evaluation team understands that practical approaches include, among others, practical relevant field research, the practical use of results and findings for regional and national development strategies, as well as partnerships with practitioners from the field to support capacity development beyond academic institutions and the integration of community stakeholders.

¹⁰ For better comparability we analysed only the logical frameworks as information is similarly structured, projects will be measured against these and we expect a higher overlapping with the reality than in chapters which in general present explanations on practical use of the findings.

stakeholders from practice and ratings were given on a four-point Likert scale¹¹ (see Figure 4). The results from the document review suggest that in general there is a high linkage to practice. Our rating shows that 12 projects (28 %) show a very high linkage in the project design, 19 (44 %) still integrate several aspects in the logical framework but leave out some groups and 9 (21 %) projects refer to rather passive dissemination strategies of results (see Figure 4). According to the documents provided, three projects (7 %) do not show any connection to practice in their logical framework.

Figure 4: Results for assessment of practical orientation and linkage to practitioners (n=43)¹²



Source: Document review

The case studies confirm a high level of linkages to practice but showcase different means to achieve the same. A best practice name in this regard is STRECAFISH with the main objective to build-up a practically-oriented MSc training for students. Hereby, from the very beginning, the project included relevant stakeholders in the Fishery sector and set up partnerships to organise three weeks of field visits at respective Fishery institutes. According to a stakeholder interview, these field visits are of high importance as most students had never been exposed to practical and hands-on training or “even never touched a fish”. In addition, Fishery institutes involved can equally benefit from the partnership – be it by strengthening their own capacities in the course of the project or through recruiting well-trained students for their own institutes.

✓ Gender sensitivity

The guidelines for applicants refer with respect to gender sensitivity to the fact that “gender is systematically integrated in the project plan.” In APPEAR II calls it refers to the project design. It further says in the documents that gender mainstreaming (i) should refer to measures to increase the percentage of women working/ benefiting from the project, (ii) teaching and research cooperation should include gender sensitive perception and analysis of the society and (iii) the gender dimension should be communicated to the public when doing public relations activities.

¹¹ The best assessment project applications received when several aspects in the logical framework showed a strong link between research activities and practitioners offering training to them, including them in discussions and targeting them in applying the newly developed methods. Even though, the dissemination of results and findings to them is an important activity we assessed projects better in which they were integrated more actively.

¹² 4 = good or very good linkage to practice, 3 = satisfactory linkage to practice, 2 = potential for improvement in linkage to practice and 1= considerable potential for improvement in linkage to practice

The evaluation at-hand dedicates a separate chapter to gender, which includes relevant evaluation questions that refer to this aspect (see 3.8). Eventually, the conclusion chapter will summarise results with respect to gender mainstreaming as cross-cutting issue.

- ✓ “Bottom-up” and demand-driven approach

According to guidelines for APPEAR I a demand-driven approach occurs when “proposed activities are based on institutional and societal needs in the southern country.” All applications describe the need for the project and certain activities. Especially, the alignment with country strategies is one part in the application emphasising the connection between project planning and the country’s needs. While the study also refers in the relevance chapter to that connection (see chapter 3.3), we focus here more on the bottom-up approach and the need of the respective institution. Furthermore, also the participatory approach and the Preparatory Funding deliver important contributions in that respect which are further elaborated in the section on effectiveness (see chapter 3.4.3). Therefore, within the document review we were searching for systematic approaches and tools that assure the fitting of the project activities to the needs of the institutions and beneficiaries. Eight of 43 projects (19 %) refer to needs assessment at the institutional level, 11 (26 %) refer to needs assessment with respect to beneficiaries e.g. farmers, companies, communities and another 11 projects to both kind of needs assessment. Thirteen projects (30 %) do not refer to needs assessment on which the development of their activities is based on. Therefore, most of the projects (i.e. 30, 70 %) provide some kind of needs assessment either on the institutional level or on beneficiaries’ level.

3.1.2 To what extent does the project take the programme’s added values into account during its implementation and if not, what are the reasons?

Apart from the five principles, four added values principles shall be analysed. These added values are not obligatory to be adhered to during project implementation but are considered in the application process supporting decision making of the selection board. The added values refer to the following topics:

- ✓ Alignment with the respective ADC country strategy
 - ✓ Disability mainstreaming
 - ✓ Regional networks
 - ✓ Focus on young scientists and in particular young female scientists
-
- ✓ Alignment with the respective ADC country strategy

While the guidelines for applicants refer to the requirement of a relation to the thematic focus of the respective regions or country of ADC, only since the 5th call in 2016 a separate section was integrated in the application document called “Alignment of the respective national ADC focus or the ADC priorities in the country(ies)”.¹³ This leads to a clear difference in the focus of the contents as since 2016 projects are more explicitly referring to the Austrian country strategy. The projects mostly (17 of 21, 81 %) refer to the thematic foci of APPEAR. As these thematic areas are aligned only to the general ADC strategy but do not refer to single countries, no clear statement can be made. Thus, there is a clear connection of the content to the subsections in the application template and rather not a strong connection to the content of the guideline for applicants which might suggest a revision of provided documents. Also, in the latter period six of 22 projects (27 %) do not fill in the section or

¹³ Until the 4th call this section was more generally called “Alignment of the objectives and activities with the thematic focus of the Programme”.

refer to country or international strategies rather than describing the alignment with Austrian country strategies. On the basis of the document review, the majority of projects (i.e. 16, 73 %) implemented since 2016 can be assessed as being aligned to the respective ADC country strategy.

Furthermore, we found in eight project documents evidence for meetings with ADC officials during the planning or implementation phase which is an important piece of evidence for harmonisation and coordinating efforts, which further increase the alignment with the ADC country strategy. Still, we also found evidence during case study interviews that cooperation with ADA staff is not always easy to achieve for project coordinators. One citation from a case study project team member describes the problem as follows:

“We would have wished for mutual planning and coordination. But there was no ownership among ADA coordinators regarding the [...] project, they only came to workshops.” – Project staff

✓ Disability mainstreaming (only APPEAR II)

Disability mainstreaming has been introduced as added value in APPEAR II, stating that “APPEAR partnerships have to consider the rights of persons with disabilities (PwD) in their project work.”¹⁴, whereas APPEAR I guidelines for applicants do not contain a reference to disability aspects.

The document review shows that in APPEAR I, despite not having explicitly asked for, three projects refer to disability in their application (Project No. 22-WATER-CAP, 26-PROSOWO and 40-RESPOND-HER). The first two refer to the group in the application but do not elaborate on a clear disability mainstreaming strategy. In contrast, RESPOND-HER focuses on improving conditions and employability of Persons with Disability (PwD) in Ethiopia. For APPEAR II projects, 12 out of 26 (46 %) refer to disability at a different level. The follow-up project of RESPOND-HER – INEDIS – again puts focus on PwD. Furthermore, four projects describe in their project documents several activities with respect to disability mainstreaming. One project lists some measures while not referring to all projects components. Six projects refer in a rather general way to disability mainstreaming or assume that their activities have indirectly positive effects for PwD. More than half of the APPEAR II projects are not referring at all in their application or further documents to PwD. Therefore, the document review indicates that six projects (23 %) in APPEAR II can be considered as disability-mainstreamed and the majority of the projects are not disability-mainstreamed.

✓ Focusing on young academics

A further added value integrated into the guidelines for applicants is the focus on young scientists, hinting that the consortium should integrate young researchers and/or teachers and especially female young researchers. Accordingly, we firstly analysed the awareness on the same in project documents, and secondly examined the age of project team members, as provided in the application documents.

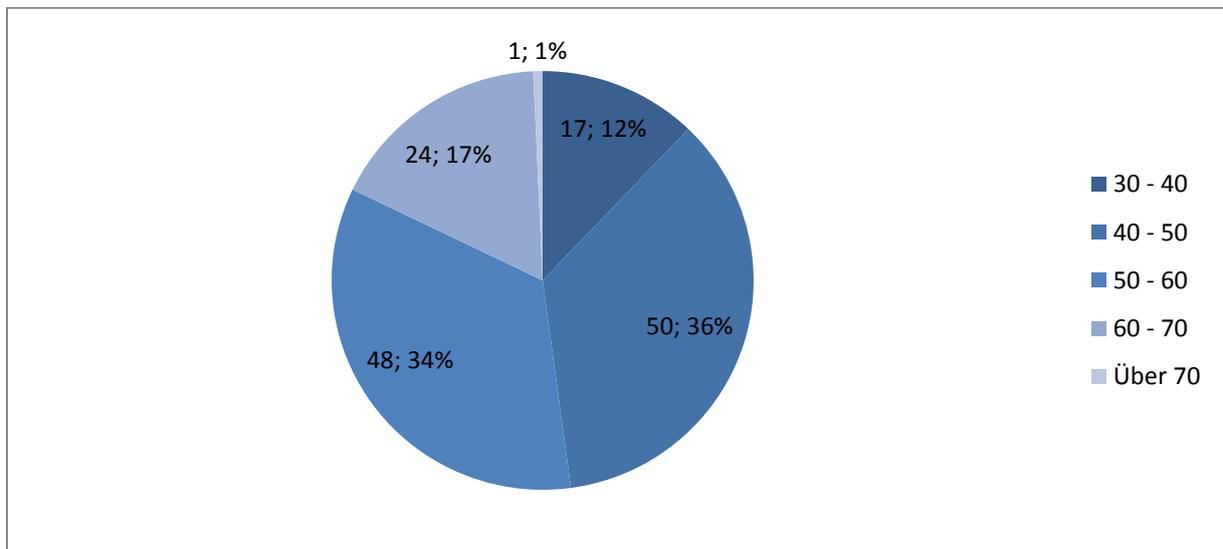
With respect to the awareness of the focus on young scientists 14 of 43 projects (33 %) are describing clearly their focus on young scientists through concrete measures. Nine reports (21%) provide single concrete measures, four reports (9 %) refer to this aspect only very generally and 16 (37 %) are not at all commenting it at all.

Examining the age of project team members for which the birth year is available, Figure 5 shows that the majority of team members is between 40 – 50 (36 %) and 50 – 60 (34 %) years old. Only 12 % are

¹⁴ See Guideline for applicants 2015-2017.

below 40. Further analysis reveals that these results are similar when disaggregating into northern and southern team members.

Figure 5: Age of team members (n=140)



Source: Document review

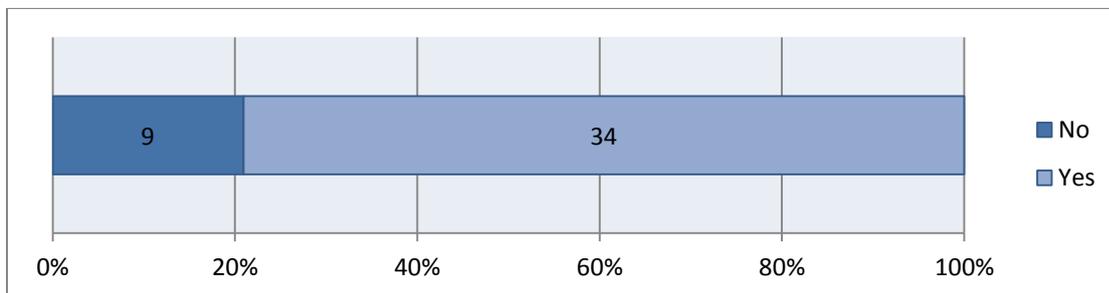
The document analysis suggests that the majority of project team members cannot be classified as young academics. Nevertheless, there might be further younger team staff not listed in the project documents. Case study interviews reveal that, for instance, in the CapNex project strong focus is put on supporting young academics in developing improved research and teaching skills. At Makerere University, case study leaders of the project have freshly graduated from their PhD programme and the APPEAR project is the first international collaboration opportunity the researchers are engaged in. Thereby, not only research skills are strengthened but also capacities to supervise MSc students are promoted and communication skills are improved.

3.2 Are APPEAR projects results-oriented and consider the programme objective?

The following section examines result and programme orientation based on the documents provided and thereby puts emphasis on projects’ logical frameworks. Discussions with the APPEAR Office revealed, that the logical framework is not considered during the selection process and might not receive as much of attention as assumed. Nevertheless, since it forms part of applications and has the potential to be of instrumental use to guide project implementation and are useful monitoring tools for setting targets, the evaluation team examines projects’ logical frameworks in more detail to retrieve answers to the following question: Do application documents provide the basis for results-orientation and do the projects consider the programme objective adequately in their applications?

Following theory-based evaluation approaches, a results model is considered necessary in order to assess an intervention against its Theory of Change, which has been developed either beforehand or is developed during the evaluation. The project documents reveal that only three projects refer to a Theory of Change and only in two projects the term is actually used in its intended sense. Nevertheless, all projects present a logical framework that are useful to systemise project objectives, indicators, source of verifications and risk or assumptions. However, a thorough analysis of logical frameworks reveals potential for improvement. One weakness identified is that the different results levels (output, outcome and impact) are not clearly separated and indicators do not fit to the different levels. When analysing the sequence of “expected results”, “specific objective” and overall objective there are often inconsistencies. Especially the difference between “expected results” and “specific objectives” is not clear-cut in most project documents. Figure 6 shows that nine out of 43 logical frameworks do not follow a logical order.

Figure 6: Logical order in logical framework (n=43)



Source: Document review

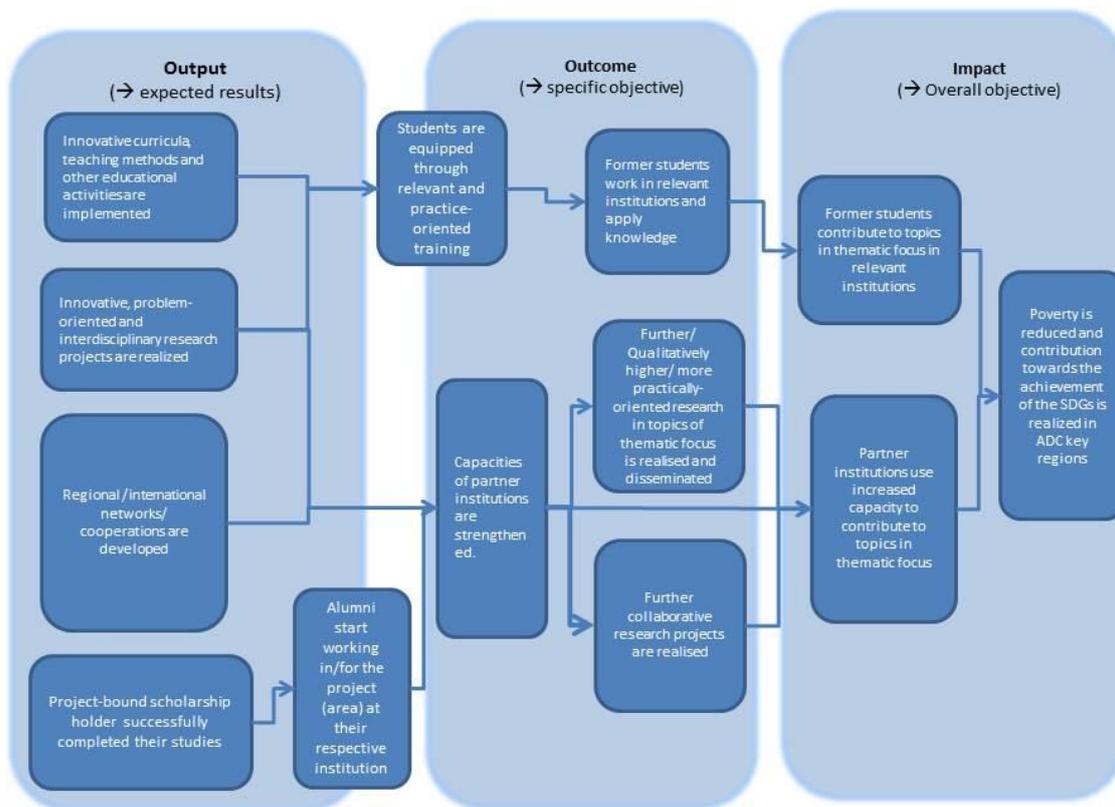
Furthermore, remarks on the quality of indicators can be made¹⁵: Firstly, the analysis revealed a very different quality in indicators across project frameworks. While several projects determined them in a detailed and measurable way often including target values, several projects did not formulate SMART indicators. Recognising this weakness during APPEAR I, concrete instructions on developing SMART indicators are now included in APPEAR II templates. Secondly, indicators for the short-term outcome (→ Specific objective) rather refer to output indicators and similarly those on the medium-term outcome – impact level (→ overall objective) are often not correctly defined.

This inconsistency has implications for the analysis in the following chapters. Instead of using individual project definitions and understandings, the evaluation team refers to a common understanding of different levels of effects (i.e. output, outcome and impact). Accordingly, in a first step, the evaluation team reconstructed a generic project results model (see Figure 7) to clarify on pathways from

¹⁵ Assessing the quality of indicators in detail was not in the scope of this evaluation, nevertheless, logical frameworks were analysed to an extent to draw conclusions in this regard.

output, to outcome and to impact. The development of such a model was deemed necessary in order to understand the projects' modes of actions and to consistently articulate the findings in the effectiveness (at output and outcome level) and impact chapter.

Figure 7: Reconstructed generic results model for APPEAR projects



In a second step, the reference and connection to the overall programme objective in the logical framework was assessed.

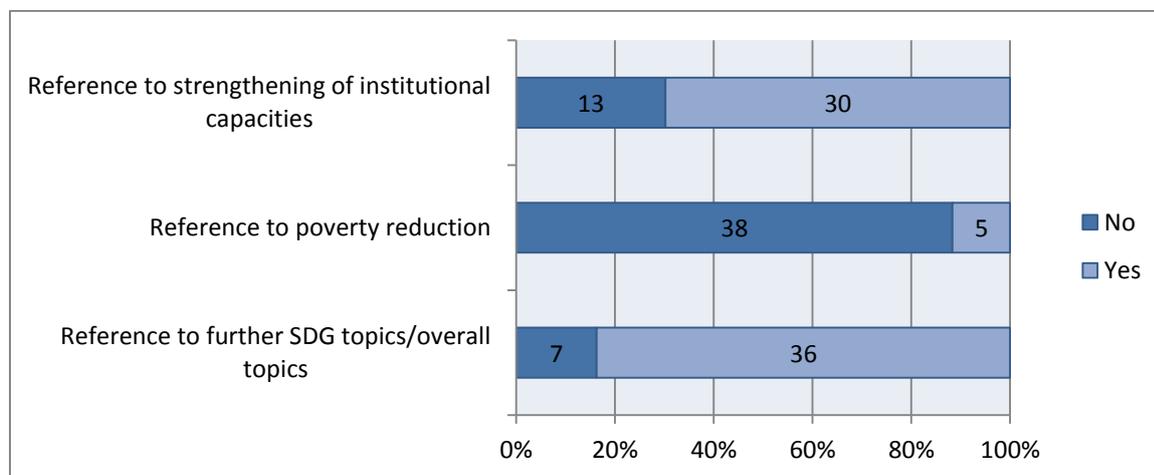
Overall programme objective:

Locally relevant **institutional capacities** (teaching, research and management) of higher education institutions in partner countries, priority regions and former ADC priority countries are strengthened; ultimately, they make an effective and sustainable contribution to **poverty reduction**. The institutions involved have developed a culture of cooperation based on the respective strengths of the partners.

Sixty percent of the projects refer to both contents of the programme objective, strengthening capacities of higher education institutions as well as poverty reduction or SDG topics. Only two projects (5%) do not refer to the programme objective at all. Fifteen (35%) refer either only to strengthening capacities of higher education institutions or to poverty reduction/SDG topics. While 11 projects (26%) refer to poverty reduction or SDG topics but not to strengthening the capacity of the institutions, four refer to strengthening capacities but not to poverty reduction and SDG topics. Thus, for almost half of the projects (17 of 43, 40%) the programme objective is not comprehensively reflected into the logical framework implying a rather loose connection of the larger part of projects to the

programme’s Theory of Change. Concerning the connection of projects to the international development context, their reference to the SDGs is analysed in the effectiveness chapter (3.4).

Figure 8: Reference to programme objective in logical framework (n=43)



Source: Document review

Thus, the results orientation of the projects is according to the project documents of diverse nature. While some projects developed logical frameworks and indicators that are methodologically sound and reflect the programme objective, others do not provide a high quality monitoring tool for achieving results orientation. With respect to the programme objective more projects might be considering it but not integrating it in their logical frameworks.

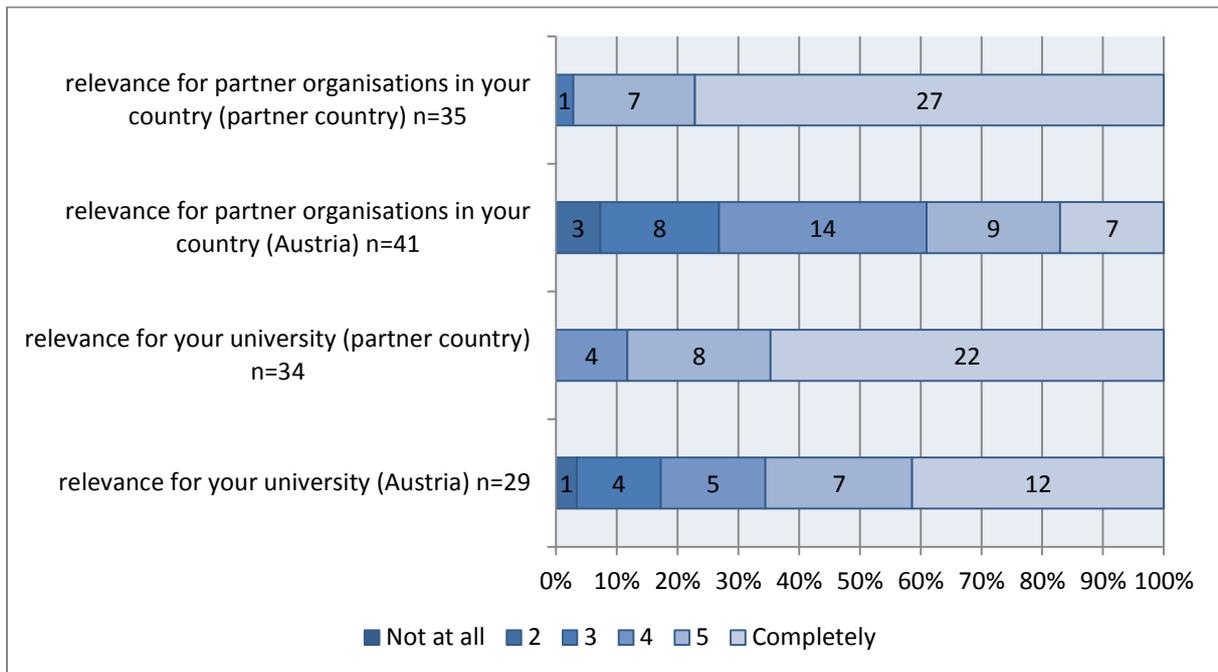
3.3 Relevance

3.3.1 To what extent are the objectives of the project relevant for the participating institutions and/or department?

The relevance of the projects for the participating institutions and departments can mainly be assessed on the basis of the data from the online survey of the project team members, interviews with ADA staff and the case studies.

Respondents from partner countries rate the relevance of the project for the university and overall for the institutions in their country very high. As Figure 9 shows more than half of the respondents from partner countries rate the projects as completely relevant for their university (27 of 35, 77 %) or the partner organisations in their country (22 of 34, 65 %). With respect to Austrian institutions this picture is however more heterogeneous. While the relevance for Austrian universities is seen higher than for other participating institutions from Austria, for both questions ratings are located in the majority of the three upper categories. Nevertheless, a certain share sees little relevance for the Austrian university (5 of 29, 17 %) and more pronounced for the further partner organisations (11 of 41, 27 %).

Figure 9: Relevance of APPEAR project for institutions



Source: Online survey of project team members

Also ADA coordinators express the high relevance for the institutions as for example in Ethiopia standards in the higher education system are quite low impeding the engagement of universities and academic institutions in regional /international research programmes as they are not very attractive for cooperation and student exchange.

Findings from case study interviews are in line with the results above. Most project team members regard the relevance for participating institutions in the South as very high. Context specific reasons comprise, among others, (1) lack of sufficient qualified staff at PhD level at e.g. University of Burundi (PROSOWO) and Dilla University (INEDIS), (2) lack of multi-disciplinary research approaches to e.g. cater the complexity of rural transformation in the TRANSACT project, (3) lack of research in the cross-border region of Uganda and Kenya in CapNex and (4) lack of practically oriented trainings for

students to strengthen the Fishery sector by building up a well-equipped workforce as envisioned by STRECAFISH.

The INEDIS project, however, revealed that the relevance among different partner institutions involved in the same project differs: While from a thematical point of view INEDIS apparently is less relevant for the well-established 1st generation Addis Ababa University (AAU) compared to Dilla University and University of Gondar, the fact that the AAU is not only the coordinating institution but also passes on knowledge to 2nd and 3rd generation universities within the country, makes it indeed of high relevance for the department involved.

During the interviews, the interviewer had to explicitly inquire about the relevance for the Austrian institution, as most interviewees directly referred to the southern partners when asked about relevance. Nevertheless, once asked, interesting aspects emerged, such as (1) opportunities for researcher and students to engage in development research and sub-sequent broadening of horizons and skills, (2) learning about cross-cutting issues such as disability-management and gender (see excursus 1) and (3) practical application of research methods in the field.

EXCURSUS 1: Disability management in Austria – Learnings from the South

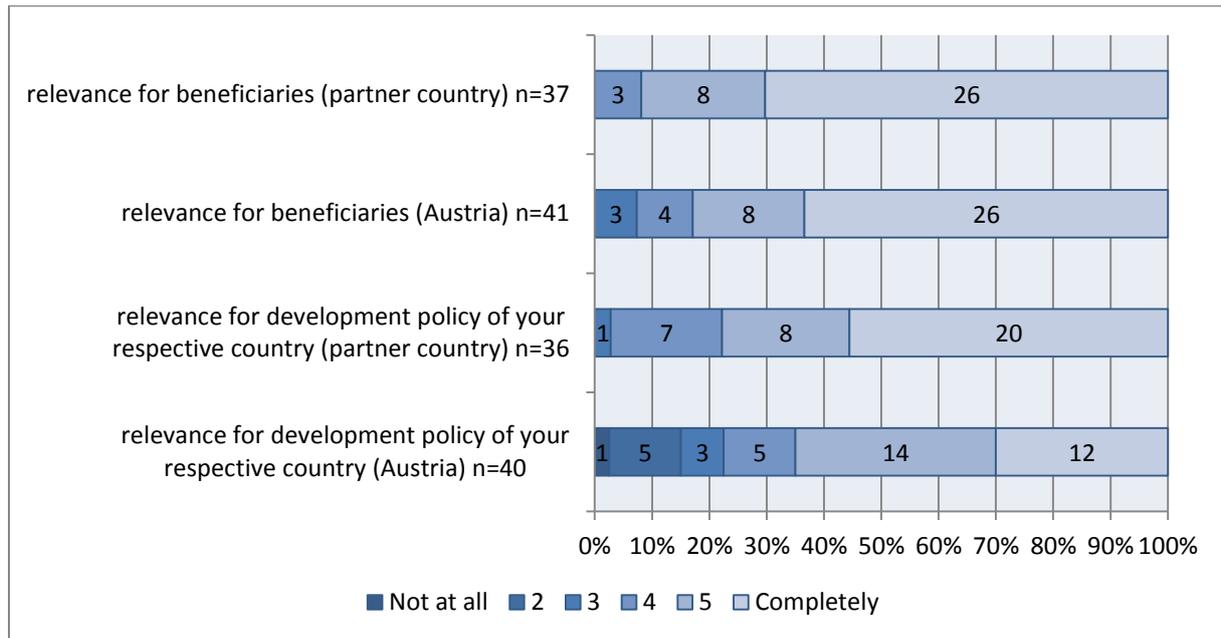
Mutual knowledge exchange is one of the key principles of APPEAR, yet it is not always clear to what extent Austrian institutions are receptive in acquiring and applying knowledge from South partner institutions. The RESPOND-HER/ INEDIS project, however, can be considered as best practice in terms of adopting learnings from their APPEAR partner in respect to disability management. According to Austrian project team members, universities in Austria can be considered as being a “development country”, as they lack institutionalised services for Students with Disabilities (SwD). According to several stakeholders the initiative ‘Barrierefreies Studieren’ at the University of Vienna shows substantial insufficiencies and lacks funds and acknowledgement. In contrast, at the AAU, the Disability Centre is prominently placed at the ground floor of the Education department and well-equipped with technical devices to facilitate learning arrangements for SwD. Evidence was found that the RESPOND-HER project was thus highly relevant for the Austrian institution: Acknowledging these differences, the person in charge of ‘Barrierefreies Studieren’ visited the AAU in the course of the INEDIS project to retrieve learnings and best practices from staff and students involved.

3.3.2 To what extent are the objectives of the project, as stated in the applications, relevant for the development of the participating countries and for the beneficiaries?

The assessment of the relevance for the participating countries and the beneficiaries in the respective countries rely on the online survey of project team members, interviews with ADA staff and the case studies.

The relevance for beneficiaries is equally high rated by Austrian as well as partner country respondents (Figure 10). Even though, the ratings for the relevance of the development policy are slightly lower, they still show a very positive assessment by partner country respondents.

Figure 10: Relevance of project for beneficiaries and development policy



Source: Online survey of project team members

Evidence was found for some APPEAR projects to coincide not only with ADC strategies (see chapter 3.1) but also with governmental priorities of the countries they are based in. Different project partners of TRANSACT confirmed that project activities were aligned with governmental strategies and that rural transformation was one of the top priorities of the country, considering that 85 % of Ethiopians are engaged in agriculture. Similarly, in STRECAFISH, the government recently acknowledged the high value of small-scale fishing to cater societal needs and currently attempts to acquire external funds to foster the fishery sector within the country:

“It’s big on the government’s agenda, as they realised that all necessary input costs are there: water, land, labour. It could be a great way to engage people, as the country lacks jobs for its graduates. At the same time there is rising demand [for fish] thanks to a growing middle class. Current waters are overfished, but many livelihoods depend on it due to its nutritional value. Thus, the government is looking for additional budgets, e.g. by the World Bank.” – Project Partner, STRECAFISH

In addition, case study interviews showed that the projects are not only highly relevant for the development context, but also often regarded as very innovative. Indeed, several projects of “revolutionary” character could be identified: STRECAFISH, in a rural district of Ethiopia, introduces small scale fish ponds to families who had never eaten fish before, PROSOWO I/II initiate demonstrations to foster the acknowledgement of Social Work and INEDIS stirs attention on gender-based violence of PwD among community stakeholder such as police officers.

ADA coordinators confirm the relevance of the projects in their respective countries and share reasons, as shown in the following quote:

“Highly relevant! Synergetic with ADC interventions mainly in the rural agricultural development, both on provincial and national level. Important for ADC office [...] for getting additional insights and valid information [for] policy dialogue. Projects are synergetic with other ADC interventions in [the country]. Universities need foreign support for their own internal development, as well as for financing of most important activities for which national financing is not sufficient.”
 – ADA coordinator

Furthermore, it was emphasised by an ADA coordinators that the projects are highly practically relevant not only on an academic level as they directly include e.g. smallholder communities in their action research.

The relevance for beneficiaries shows more variance across the case studies, which is reflected in the assessment in Figure 10. Some projects have components with strong linkages to the community. For instance, in the INEDIS project teacher trainings on community-based rehabilitation are conducted at Dilla University and in STRECAFISH model fish farm ponds are set up which improve the nutrition of pond owner families and their surroundings. Others, in contrast, are very research focused. While in these cases beneficiaries are included (e.g. inclusion of farmers in research activities in TRANSACT or data collection on communities in CapNex), target communities do not always avail direct benefits that contribute to the overall programme objectives.

3.4 Effectiveness

3.4.1 To what extent has the project already achieved its output(s) and outcome(s) or will be likely to achieve them?

With regards to outputs the evaluation focuses on products (capital goods) and services that emerge from the projects. Outcomes may arise from these outputs such as short-term or medium-term results. Impact, which is dealt with in section 3.6, refers to secondary long-term effects¹⁶.

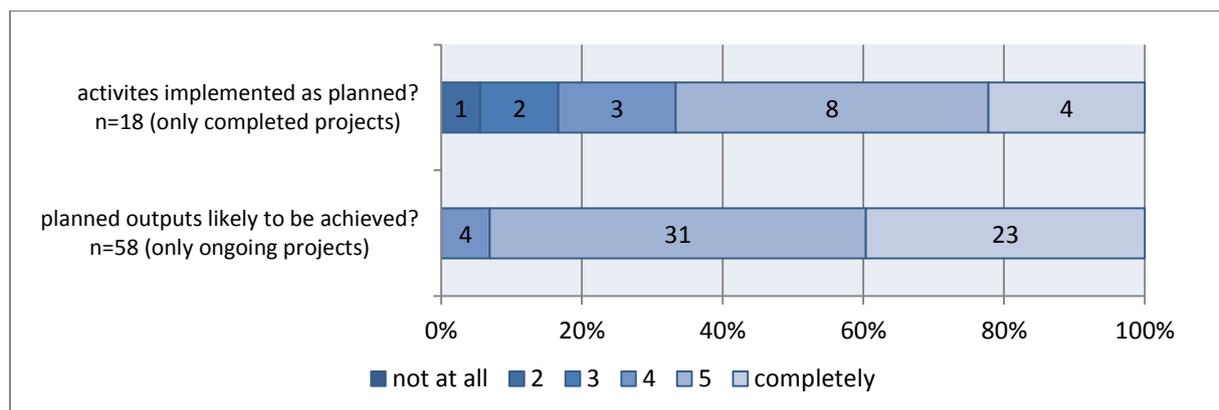
Output

Regarding outputs, firstly, the very direct results the projects bring about are analysed. These include, for instance, new or revised Master’s programmes, successfully developed and implemented trainings and development-oriented research. Therefore, the evaluation team analysed the final reports of the completed projects, with special focus on logical frameworks and chapters on ‘Failed objectives’ and ‘Deviations’. Focus is set on completed projects.

The documents present a quite positive view on achievements with respect to outputs. For the 18 completed projects, it is found that five (28 %) indicate complete achievement of outputs during the project duration. Thirteen projects describe deviations at the end of the project leading to non-achievement of some indicators. Mostly this refers only to a few minor activities. Nevertheless, in some cases it refers to key results: For instance, a new Master’s programme has not yet been approved by the university or a publication in a journal could not (yet) been achieved. While the respective reports describe that these processes will be completed after the project end, yet it remains questionable if these results will be achieved eventually.

The survey of project team members shows a similar picture in respect to completed projects: 67% (12) state that the outputs were completely or at least mostly achieved (6 or 5 in the Likert scale). Furthermore, all respondents from ongoing projects appear to be rather convinced that outputs are going to be achieved in the future (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: Achievement of outputs



Source: Online survey of project team members

Also the results of the case study interviews go in the same direction. Interviewees confirmed that in most cases all activities were implemented, but not always on-time. In case outputs were not delivered, specific reasons were given:

¹⁶ See OECD (2013) Development Results. An Overview of Results Measurement and Management. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/Development-Results-Note.pdf>

- ✓ The time frame of three years was often regarded as being too short and no-cost extensions were applied for by several projects.
- ✓ In one case, an output that could not be achieved during the initial project was then finalised in the subsequent AAP.
- ✓ For at least one project in Ethiopia the mandatory ten percent pre-financing in the last year before the final disbursement of funds was not achievable due to bureaucratic barriers within their institutes. Accordingly, the remaining activities were not implemented. No solution has been found so far and for the current AAP a similar scenario is expected by the team.
- ✓ In Project 99, the cooperation with a national institute, which was a crucial component of the project, came not into being because of lacking commitment of the institution.
- ✓ The TRANSACT PhD program on Rural Transformation at University of Bahir Dar was not realised in time, while the planned Master programme at University of Gondar has been implemented.

Outcome

According to the results model developed in chapter 3.1 main outcomes centre around increased capacities of institutions, students, stakeholders and project-bound scholarship holders. This refers to e.g. the ability to develop innovative curricula, to realise innovative, problem-oriented interdisciplinary research and to apply learnings and findings of PhD research at relevant institutions.

First, final reports of completed projects are analysed for outcomes. Only five projects refer in their logical frameworks to actual project level outcomes and corresponding indicators. Accordingly, assessments on the outcome level can only be made for them. Of these five projects, three achieved their outcomes to a good or very good extent, one satisfactorily and one with potential for improvement. Examples mentioned in the documents include, amongst others, established units that work independently on the area, students' knowledge gain, knowledge gain of trained persons/organisations, capacities to conduct similar courses on their own, improved management skills, or improved research capacity. Also, during case study interviews as well as in open questions posed in the online survey, project staff often reported personal outcomes in terms of improved capacities. Here not only project-related capacities (e.g. new methodologies, concepts, approaches and knowledge) were mentioned, but also soft skills, such as increased project management, publishing capacities, cross-cultural communication and language skills, as well as leadership skills that evolved thanks to the project.

The online survey directed to project team members confirms this rather high achievement of outcomes with average ratings between 4 and 5¹⁷ especially with respect to individual capacities. Thereby, the 'development of individual capacities', 'increased cultural awareness' and 'mutual knowledge exchange triggered' were rated best. The 'contribution to the development of capacities at the department or unit' received lower average ratings, while the 'contribution to increase the research quality' and 'teaching quality' were rated the worst. For teaching quality almost one third of the respondents (21 of 71) does rather or strongly not agree that the project contributed to increase it and for research quality same holds true for 19 of 69 respondents (23 %).

¹⁷ Rating on agreement to statements from 1 to 6, where 1 = I do not agree at all & 6 = I agree completely.

3.4.2 *What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the outputs and outcomes? (Also consider any which were possibly beyond the control of the project)?*

This question shall first be answered by examining qualitative information from case study interviews, which revealed supporting and impeding factors that are common across different projects. First and foremost, **physical meetings** are considered as indispensable to ensure project success. Only then cognitive distance between partners involved can be bridged and committed working relationships can be established. Several projects (Project 99, PROSOWO, STRECAFISH) reported to have had intensive kick-off meetings over the course of at least one week, where project planning was discussed and milestones were jointly defined. PROSOWO representatives mention the power of 'team spirit' and a rather informal relationship of people 'living the mission' of the project. Despite rapid communication via email and skype, frequent physical meet ups, ideally not being of short duration and including all relevant project team members, enable the project team to set up a productive and close working relationship that translates into good project results.

A second supporting factor surrounds **context experience** in the partners' environment to achieve better mutual understanding on philosophies, cultures and working conditions. This includes both experience of Austrian researchers in the South as well as exposure to the working environment in Austria by the Southern project staff. According to a PROSOWO project partner in the South: *"A plus of our project is that we work together with a partner who understands East Africa so well. There was another project where the Austrian partner did not have much experience in East Africa and it was much more difficult."* And the lack of this experience has also been seen as a challenge in another project as e.g. expectations vary very strongly.

Thirdly, the **network of OeAD** alumni (mostly former APPEAR and North-South-Dialogue¹⁸ scholars, who were financed by the Austrian Development Cooperation) is of great benefit to many projects. While some direct working relationships emerge between PhD students and supervisors, there are also indirect ways on how OeAD alumni get involved in a project. During RESPOND-HER, the project team conducted field research at eleven different universities across Ethiopia and identified Dilla University as new partner for the subsequent AAP. The university's president is a former APPEAR scholar and thus directly puts in ownership and commitment to the project.

Lastly, **frequent communication** was found to be a supporting factor and, hereby, informal ways of communication, e.g. through WhatsApp and Skype, proved to be beneficial. Nevertheless, personal exchange at several points in time are indispensable to intensify the dialogue between partners and discuss relevant project aspects.

Several hindering factors were mentioned by project partners and ADA coordinators. First and foremost, **security issues and political turmoil** are of concern for project teams. These influenced projects in Ethiopia (INEDIS, STRECAFISH) and Kenya (STRECAFISH), and caused delay in the implementation of activities. Similarly, projects in Palestine are subject to a tensed political situation, often impeding out- and inward travels. These conditions must be well understood by project partners and APPEAR programme staff, and individual solutions have to be found for each project to move forward.

Project partners in the eligible countries often encounter **bureaucratic barriers** within their institution, which clash with the stringent and elaborated requirements of APPEAR. Overcoming these requires tedious efforts and tight communication with the OeAD programme team. Especially audit

¹⁸ Both programmes have been fully funded by the ADC/ ADA.

requirements were considered to be challenging, taking up a lot of costs and time, especially when numerous partners are involved. While bureaucratic hurdles have been solved in most cases, project partners of the RESPOND-HER and INEDIS project have not yet found a solution to enabling the ten percent pre-financing requirements posed by APPEAR. **Linguistic barriers**, while not expected by project partners beforehand, occurred in Project 99 and BIOREM, due to insufficient English, respectively, Spanish skills on either side.

The TRANSACT project revealed that one impeding factor of the project was the inclusion of **higher officials as project partners**, who were taken up by other activities and did not attribute enough time in the project implementation. While high level management might bring legitimacy to the project, they might not necessarily be the ones implementing activities.

Furthermore, **high staff turnover** mitigates potential project success and was found to be problematic in Project 99, where staff changed on both sides. In the same project, **lack of intrinsic motivation** was mentioned as a weakening factor, as the project was not of core interest of leading coordinators on both sides. The project team showed insufficient ownership and commitment. Coupled with too little synergies in interest and difficulties in collaborating, this resulted in weaker outcomes and no follow-up activities.

Lastly, conflicts between project partners were mentioned by few team members, potentially influencing project outcomes negatively. Excursus 2 elaborates on the necessity of conflict resolution.

EXCURSUS 2: Conflict resolution as an important skill for APPEAR project partners

Case Study interviews revealed that in few cases conflicts have occurred between project partners. These were either rooted in stark hierarchical structures in the country of the Global South or occurred because of misinterpretation of character traits, backgrounds or artificial power relations. Interestingly, cultural differences were less considered to be the reason for disharmonic relationships.

“Starting was very tough, everybody was brought together but had different ideas who he/she wanted to push through. There was no agreement but lots of arguments, discussions and quarrels, mainly caused by individualistic thinking. Everybody wanted to inject their disciplinary ideas at the beginning.” – Project partner TRANSACT

While these conflicts remain the exception, they can jeopardise the achievement of project outputs and outcomes and, eventually, adversely affect impact and sustainability.

In a few cases conflicts occurred during the APPEAR project without finding resolutions for the same, leading to mutual disinterest in maintaining post-project working relationships. As single individuals are often the channel to departments and institutions, consequences are of significance and hamper current and future collaboration and networking.

Thus, some APPEAR project staff might require improved conflict resolution skills to deal with unexpected incompatibilities. One potential solution could be mediation of a third party: Indeed, in one project the APPEAR Office took on the role as a mediator to listen to both parties and find a solution to the conflict that occurred.

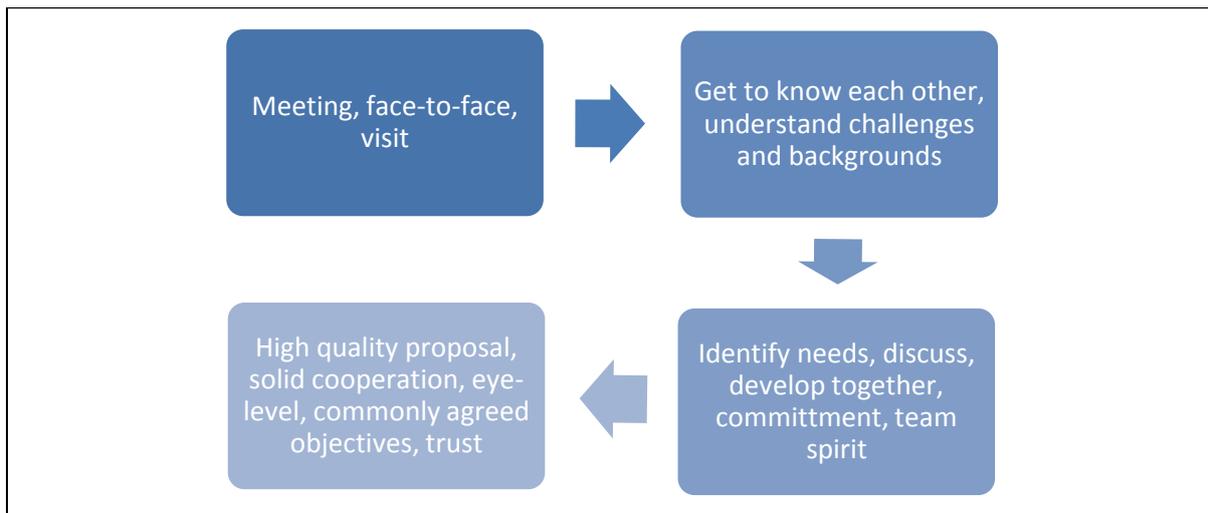
In the online-survey directed to project team members findings largely coincide with impeding factors mentioned above. Respondents assessed the given financial volume and timeframe as most

challenging factors for project management. In addition, the political situation and complying with the rules and regulations in the partner countries are seen by the majority of respondents as rather challenging. Communication between the partner organisations and complying with rules of regulations of Austrian organisations are rated somewhat less challenging. Eventually, linguistic barriers, cultural barriers and staff fluctuation do not appear to be a major challenge in most projects.

3.4.3 How far did a previous APPEAR Preparatory Funding influence the project team’s ability to deal with these factors?

Twelve projects received Preparatory Funding. Looking at survey results of project team members, the feedback on Preparatory Funding is very positive. The different aspects mentioned across respondents are visualised in Figure 12. Important is that it was not only seen crucial in the preparation process – as without funding no proposal would have been possible – but that also the overall project implementation process benefits from the proximity between actors involved triggered from the very beginning. The importance of meetings and getting to know each other, to understand the respective contexts and to be able to jointly discuss relevant topics apparently leads to a better basis for cooperation and increased ownership from all partners. Team members stated to be more committed and that a team spirit arises, which leads in the end to a proposal of higher quality and, hence, eventually to a more targeted and jointly implemented project.

Figure 12: Benefits of the Preparatory Funding



Source: Own visualisation

These survey results are substantiated by information retrieved from case studies. The case study projects that counted with Preparatory Funding assessed the same to be of great benefit for the project. In most cases, it was used to set up an intensive kick-off meeting to get to know each other, establish a working relationship and define detailed project milestones and roles and responsibilities. According to several project partners, the Preparatory Funding allowed to set up a truly participatory approach in developing the project proposal. One team member describes the benefits retrieved as follows:

“None of us knew each other, there were no projects, no collaborations. The Preparatory Funding was thus very important and enabled us to meet in Nairobi for a five-day workshop. Afterwards everyone participated in the first call and it was extremely participatory. I myself had never been part in anything like this before.” – Project Partner, PROSOWO

Only one project did not require Preparatory Funding, as partners already knew each other and thus the proposal could be drafted without additional financial resources.

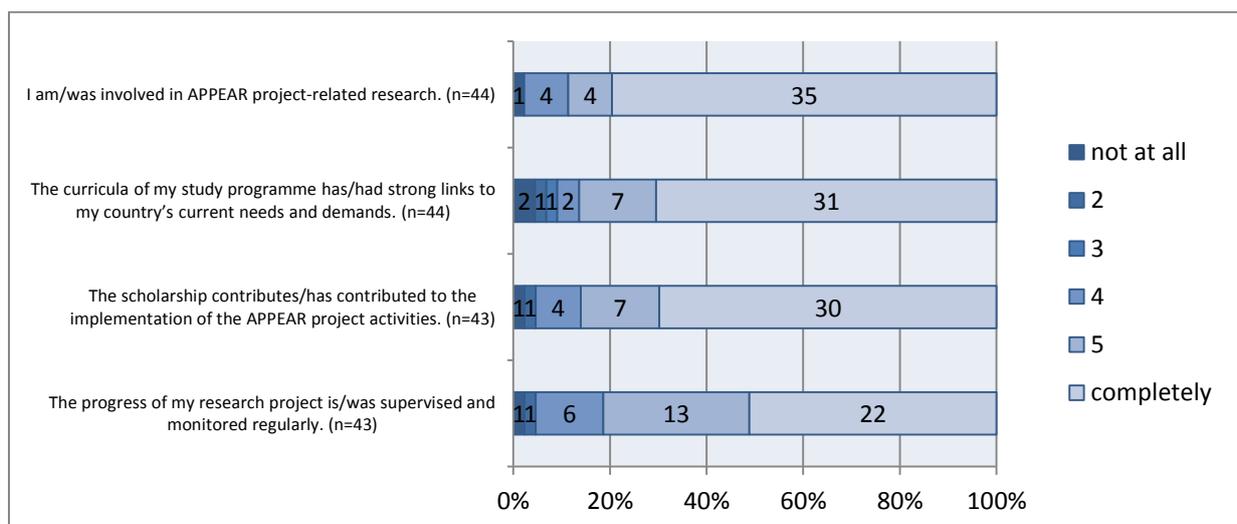
To sum up, with respect to the question to what extent Preparatory Funding responds to supporting and impeding factors during project implementation, the following conclusions can be made: First and foremost, Preparatory Funding enables face-to-face meetings and direct communication, which was identified as one major requirement for successful partnership projects. With it, informal and personal relationships can be established, which mitigates the risk of conflict and increases commitment among participating parties. Furthermore, context-specific knowledge can be included and bureaucratic barriers in the countries can be identified leading to a more realistic planning. Lastly, Preparatory Funding fosters eye-to-eye collaboration from the very beginning. Conclusively, Preparatory Funding can be considered as a catalyser for successful project implementation.

3.4.4 To what extent do project-bound scholarships enrich the project and the institutions in their efforts to develop institutional capacities and contribute to the achievements of the project’s results?

According to the guidelines of applicants, project-bound scholarships should contribute to institutional capacity development and poverty reduction in their countries of origin¹⁹. The scholars should be involved in academic partnerships or ADC programmes and contribute to the implementation of the partnership.

In the online survey directed to current and former scholarship-holders, questions focused on the connection between their own research and the actual APPEAR project. As Figure 13 shows, the majority of APPEAR students and alumni completely agree that they were (i) involved in project-related research, (ii) that their study programme was related to their country’s needs and demands and (iii) that their research contributed to the implementation of project activities. When inquiring about regular supervision and monitoring of research progress, the majority indeed agrees as well. However, the share of those who see at least some room for improvement in this regard is with 19 % considerably higher.

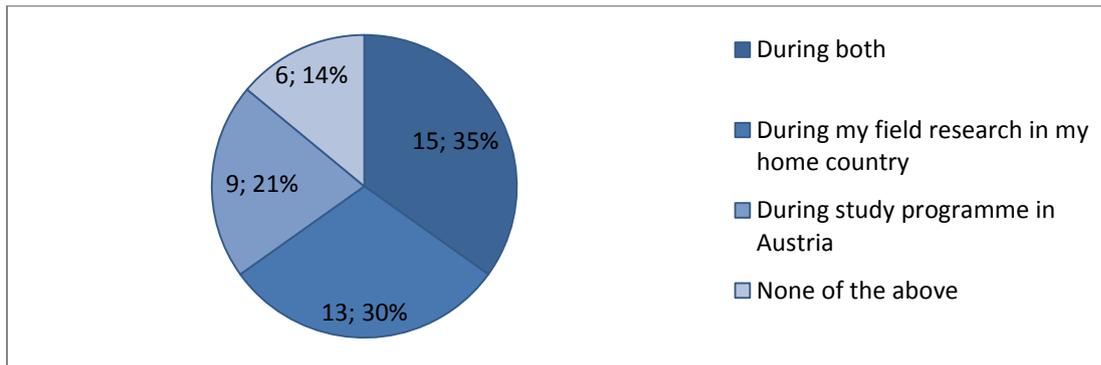
Figure 13: Connection of project-bound scholarship to project and country needs



Source: Online survey of project-bound scholarship holders

¹⁹ See Guidelines of applicants 2010, Call 2

Figure 14: Involvement in implementation of project activities of project-bound scholarship holders (n=43)



Source: Online survey of project-bound scholarship holders

Figure 14, examining the involvement of scholarship-holders, indicates high variation. While a good third of the respondents (i.e. 15) claim to be involved in the project, both during their studies in Austria and during their field research, 30 % (13) state to be only involved during the field research and nine only during their studies. Finally, 14 % scholars (6) are apparently not connected to the project activities in either phase. Similarly, the FGD with current APPEAR scholarship holders revealed that approximately half of them feel loosely connected to their project while pursuing their dissertation in Austria, expressing the urge to be more involved and informed and thus to have more ownership towards the project. Half of the current PhD students do feel involved and are updated via email and WhatsApp on the project progress.

According to qualitative survey results, involvement in project activities yields several benefits, such as (i) being familiar with key stakeholders, which is beneficial when collecting data later on, (ii) smoothening the cultural integration in Austria due to close and personal connection to other project members in Austria, and (iii) participation in trainings conducted by APPEAR projects.

What further benefits do APPEAR scholarships yield? The survey shows that current and former scholarship holders rank personal benefits and the contribution to institutional capacities in their home country slightly higher than other aspects. The involvement into a scientific dialogue in their home country and the contribution to the institutional capacities in Austria are ranked lowest. The explanatory power of the average ratings is relatively similar as standard deviations have a small range (1.19-1.60) and are in general at a low level.

Project team members were also asked to share their perception on the benefits of project-bound scholarships and rated the 'development of individual capacities' best (see Table 2). Whereas all other ratings are still high, between 4.77 and 5.03, the contribution to the sustainability of the project is rated as lowest. As this is one of the main goals to be achieved this requires additional analysis.

Table 2: Perceived contribution of project-bound scholarships by project team members

Contribution of project-bound scholarships to...	No. of respondents	Average rating	Standard deviation
...development of individual capacities	60	5.73	0.52
...development of academic networks	62	5.03	1.07
...project-specific research	60	4.95	1.11
...development of institutional capacities	60	4.93	1.10
...the implementation of project activities	61	4.82	1.10
...sustainability of project outcomes	61	4.77	1.16

Source: Online survey of project team members. Note: Rating on satisfaction from 1 to 6, where 1 = absolutely unsatisfactory & 6 = absolutely satisfactory

Looking at case study projects for further detail, interviewees confirmed the added value brought in by project-bound scholarship holders. Dissertation/thesis topics of APPEAR scholars are indeed relevant for all projects, but the usability of findings varies. The STRECAFISH project can be named as best practice, as here clear linkages between research and project stakeholders are established: Scholarship holders were deliberately selected from relevant key national fishery institutions, where they had been working for several years. Prior to their stay in Austria, key challenges were jointly identified by the project team, scholarship holders and their home institutes. These challenges were then taken up by the PhD students to research on, collect data and find solutions. Once they return to their institutions after completion, they can directly feed in their results and apply them in the field.

“What makes the scholarships highly relevant is that for this project the stakeholders have identified the main challenges and needs, and these are now addressed by the young researchers to find solutions. Since they come from these different institutions, they can directly translate their gained knowledge and information back to their work. The importance lies on problem-solving within the community and need-based research.” - (Project Coordinator, STRECAFISH)

These linkages are not always guaranteed. In the TRANSACT project several stakeholders argued that the APPEAR scholars finished their dissertations long after the project was over and the contribution of research findings to project outcomes remained unclear.

In two Nicaraguan projects some project partners articulated that they were not satisfied with the selection process of scholarship holders: Either they perceived that the best qualified person was not selected or that gender policy was not followed. APPEAR Office is disagreeing on these allegations.

Both current and former scholarship holders as well as project staff mention several recommendations on how to improve project-bound scholarships. Project team members who participated in the online survey share the following recommendations:

- ✓ Disseminate better and more timely information on the existence/ call of scholarships²⁰
- ✓ Offer different types of scholarships for e.g. short courses, for project staff
- ✓ Provide higher number of scholarships
- ✓ Ensure more direct connection of scholarship holders to the project

Former or current scholarship holders suggest to

²⁰ In the second APPEAR programme phase, project applicants and then selected projects could directly integrate scholarships and no separate calls for scholarships were announced.

- ✓ Increase in scholarship duration by a year as well as increase of scholarship amount
- ✓ Create country-based alumni platforms and events/conferences
- ✓ Provide more scholarship to applicants of non-priority countries to strengthen regional collaboration between scholarship holders
- ✓ Increasing the amount for field research if required to ensure quality, broad-scale data collection of primary data in home countries
- ✓ Enhance opportunities during scholarship in Austria by e.g. also involving PhD students in teaching and other research

The suggestions given highlight the importance of a higher flexibility in types of scholarships offered. Furthermore, the embedding of the students in their countries is suggested to be increased on the one hand via enhancing their connection to the project and on the other hand via supporting a country-based network. Other suggestions like increasing the number of scholarships, scholarship amount and scholarship duration is limited by the financial means available and might not be implementable.

3.5 Efficiency

3.5.1 *How effective is the cooperation managed by the project team, the tasks and responsibilities equally distributed, the monitoring systems adequate²¹ and how does the project team cope with difficulties and to what extent did a previous Preparatory Funding influence the cooperation?²²*

Statements on issues concerning cooperation and project management presented in the online survey were quite positively assessed (see Table 3). The highest agreement was achieved on the issue of whether the cooperation was managed effectively by the coordinator and if the team coped adequately with difficulties. In the Nicaraguan projects (43- BIOREM, 99) the satisfaction with the cooperation was indicated as well as very high despite the difficulties all projects faced during their implementation. Even though, there were times when communication was not so easy, they always found ways to contact each other and advance the projects.

The usefulness of the logical framework was rated lowest, but with the widest spread as indicated by the standard deviation. Partner countries in general rate these aspects better than Austrian respondents. Indeed, in-depth interviews revealed that the usage of logical frameworks varies across project teams. While there have been incidences during project interviews, where staff was no longer /not aware of the specifics of the logical frameworks, other project teams clearly referred to the framework as basis for their project management.

Table 3: Perception on cooperation and project management

Statements	No. of respondents	Average rating	Standard deviation
The cooperation was managed effectively by the project coordinator to achieve project outputs as planned.	74	5.05	1.17
The project team coped adequately with difficulties.	75	5.01	1.18
There was good communication between different partners.	75	4.87	1.06
Project monitoring supported the timely implementation of activities.	75	4.75	1.19
The tasks and responsibilities were equally distributed amongst the team.	73	4.67	1.23
The conceptualised LogFrame was a useful tool for project management.	73	4.34	1.61

Source: Online survey of project team members. Note: Rating on agreement to statements from 1 to 6, where 1 = I do not agree at all & 6 = I agree completely

²¹ Project team members mostly referred to their project plans and logical frameworks. Additional information on projects' monitoring system could not be retrieved.

²² While this question was listed under effectiveness in the ToR the contents refer rather to efficiency. Therefore, the evaluation team moved the questions to the DAC-Criterion 'Efficiency'. For elaborations on the contribution of Preparatory Funding please see chapter 3.3.4 (effectiveness).

3.5.2 *To what extent does the distribution of the budget among the partners reflect their role and engagement in the project and correspond to local fees / salaries?*

Around 60 %, respectively 50 % of respondents, are satisfied (Likert scale 5 and 6) with the budget allocation corresponding to local fees and salaries, respectively with the available resources at their own institution for project management.

Complementing quantitative data with qualitative findings from the interviews allows identifying potential reasons for ratings given: Projects with partners from non-eligible countries highly valued the rise to 20 % of the budget being allowed to be distributed to these countries. Nevertheless, it was argued that eye-level partnerships cannot easily be managed with stark differences in budget distribution between partner institutes. The PROSOWO II project set up partnerships between six countries and came up with mechanisms to enable similar achievements across all. These include strategic set-up of conferences in countries where less budget is available and sending PhD students from non-priority countries to foster capacity development in their home institutes. Also, cross-financing via other funds (in this case State of Carinthia), financial contributions by the participating institutes and additional working hours put in by the project team enabled achieving balanced outcomes across all involved partners.

Nevertheless, several project stakeholders in Ethiopia argued that the staff costs provided by APPEAR²³ is substantial less compared to other donors, NGOs or IOs. Being less attractive for higher management partners (e.g. in TRANSACT), less ownership was shown towards the project. A second concern mentioned was the expenditure for field research, which was assessed as very low by stakeholders in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia.

“The allowance for fieldwork for data collection is very, very low. This is a contradiction for my country because allowance for professors for doing research/fieldwork is a lot higher. Very few people would go into the field with so little money and do data collection” – Project Partner CapNex

Most Austrian partners on the one hand showed understanding that the majority of funds should be invested in the South and on the other hand found the distribution of budgets to be efficient on their side. According to interviewees, HR costs were reduced to a minimum, but substantial in-kind working hours were put in. It was also mentioned that travels to the partner countries are sometimes combined with other projects to achieve a cost reduction of the same.

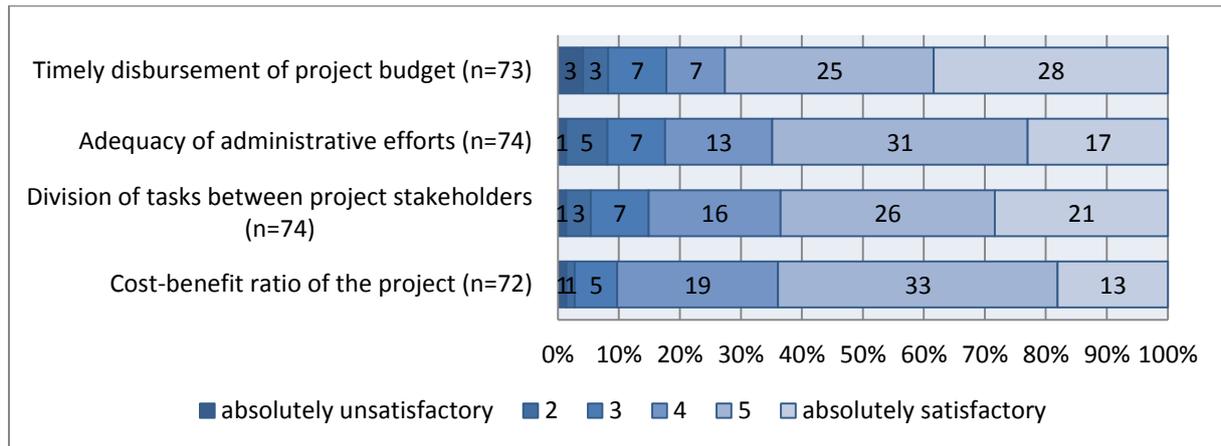
3.5.3 *Cost-benefit ratio of projects*

- a) *To what extent has the cost-benefit ratio been appropriate or could there have been more economically sound solutions to the achievement of the planned results, if yes, which ones?*
- b) *How has the allocation of resources (time and support for organisation, application, management, entry requirements, etc.) for the incorporation of scholarship holders into the project and the cost-benefit ratio been perceived by the project partners?*

In the online survey of project team members, the cost-benefit ratio is rated rather positive with 64 % of the respondents (46) perceiving it as rather satisfactory (i.e. Likert 5 and 6) (see Figure 15). In direct comparison the timely disbursement of the project budget and the adequacy of the administrative effort were rated more positive.

²³ According to the budget guidelines staff costs have to correspond to local rates in the respective countries.

Figure 15: Perceived efficiency of the project – part 2



Source: Online survey of project team members

In line with the survey results, all project team members included in the case study interviews stated that the benefits exceeded the investments. Reasons for the same refer to strict but transparent reporting requirements, including local audits, and high motivation by the partners as “everybody puts in some extra time and efforts and goes beyond what is expected.” (Project staff, STRECAFISH). Indeed, many respondents mentioned that administration requirements are very high and demand substantial time and efforts. In this regard, OeAD due to its support and guidance, mitigates an overburden of time invested in administration. In contrast, the provided financial volume was assessed as very small by the majority of interviewees, especially in comparison to other donor programmes.

ADA coordinators’ view on cost-benefit ratios of projects coincide with the project teams:

“Looking the cost-value ratio, the projects give the impression of strong efficiency. Due to their budget structure and the overall set-up of the APPEAR programme, the strong motivation of the implementing partners and obvious result orientation, ADA gets very good value for money.”
 – ADA coordinator

Most project partners value the experience and organisational support by OeAD to integrate scholarship holders in the project and found their own time and support in that regard to be rather minor. Nevertheless, supervisors emphasised that the selection process is of tremendous importance to ensure that candidates bring in sufficient experience and motivation and to set up a fruitful working relationship. A STRECAFISH project partner from Austria had travelled to Uganda to select appropriate candidates, who went through a detailed application process, in order to ensure solid matching between prospective students and supervisors.

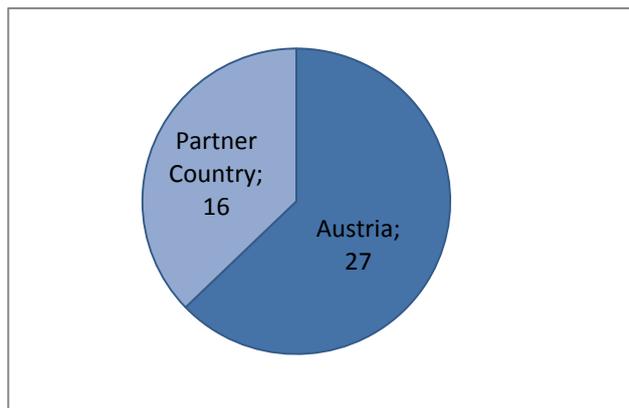
The part of the evaluation question on whether there would be **more economically sound solutions** to the achievement of the planned results could not be answered. As this evaluation is on the project level we would rely here on suggestions by the project team members as we cannot check for each project if the planning and implementation has been the economically most sound solution. Information on this could not be retrieved from the data sources included in the evaluation. Instead, the evaluation team would like to refer rather to the programme evaluation to compare different approaches of projects for answering this question.

3.6 Impact

3.6.1 What impacts / outcomes of the project can be expected (based on the fact that it was either coordinated by the Austrian partner institution or the institution in the eligible country)?

Setting the main coordinating function of partnerships in the Global South is often not foreseen in similar development cooperation projects. It is thus a unique characteristic of the APPEAR programme. Nevertheless, as displayed in Figure 16, project documents reveal that in 27 projects the coordinating institution was located in Austria (63 %) and correspondingly more than every third project was coordinated by institutions located in the eligible partner countries (16, 37 %).

Figure 16: Distribution of location of project coordination position



Source: Project applications

Case Studies showed some evidence that the entitlement of coordinating a project leads to additional impacts at the coordinating institute, be it in Austria or Global South. Impacts specific to projects which were coordinated in the South include a **strengthened South-South network** between participating institutions. For instance: While the RESPOND-HER project was coordinated by the Austrian partner, in AAP INEDIS the coordination was given to Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. It was reported that there is now weekly communication between the coordinator and the other partner institutes in Ethiopia, bringing the involved university departments closer together. Addis Ababa University being a first-generation university and having sound experience in inclusive education adopts a new role of being the “Big Brother” to the much younger and less experienced universities involved. The Austrian partner now has a much weaker role and communication is less frequent, which is lamented by the project team at the University of Vienna. This goes along with a second related impact: According to the interview partners at Addis Ababa University, giving the coordination to the partner in the South has led to great **empowerment** for the coordinating department. While the task is new and challenging, it brings along substantial learnings, acknowledgement and ownership towards the project and related outcomes. Similar developments were revealed in the STRECAFISH project, where project coordination lies at Makerere University in Uganda. Here transnational South-South networks are strengthened between institutions in Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia. In the latter small-scale fish farming is a novelty, and **transnational knowledge and experience sharing** support the promotion of introducing household fish farming in the target region. Austrian partners equally contribute with technical knowledge and supply of resources, as Ethiopia lacks fishing fodder and nets.

Looking at an example in the Global North, in PROSOWO I & II evidence was found that the project has led to **increased awareness on Social Work methods and practices from East Africa** among staff and students of the *Carinthia University of Applied Sciences*, Austria, and beyond the academic insti-

tution. The project coordinator from Austria appears to have built on a strong network within the city of Feldkirchen and initiated further projects with the federal state of Carinthia. In the course of PROSOWO, being the main project coordinator, he set up several additional symposiums at his home institute where the work of the project was presented and initiated the celebration of Social Work day in the city of Carinthia.

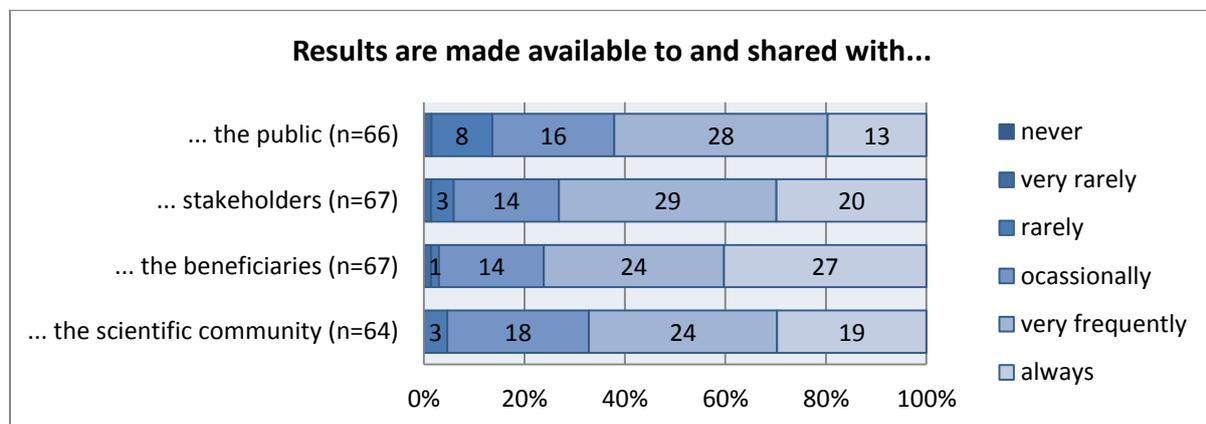
“The aim of the project was to channel back projects results to social work in Austria, for example through social events such as a march for homosexuality in Uganda and Carinthia and public events that contribute to a more differentiated image of Africa”– Project partner PROSOWO

3.6.2 Dissemination of results

- a) *To what extent have the project results been made available to / and shared with the scientific community, the stakeholders, the public and/or the beneficiaries? Are they being used?*
- b) *To what extent are the pre-defined target groups and beneficiaries addressed in the project results and is a culturally open-minded approach used when they are addressed and included in the results?*

In the survey of project team members, we asked to which groups results have been made available. More than two thirds of the respondents say that results were made available ‘very frequently’ or ‘always’ to all four different groups (see Figure 17). Thereby, the highest share of respondents (76 %) state to disseminate results ‘very frequently’ or ‘always’ to beneficiaries. With still 62 %, the lowest frequency is given to the dissemination to the public. Therefore we can summarise that there are small differences in target groups for dissemination and it positively stands out that dissemination to beneficiaries happens more regularly than to the scientific community.

Figure 17: Results dissemination



Source: Online survey of project team members

Therefore, according to project team members, most target groups regularly receive information on the project. In contrast, during case study interviews no detailed information was shared in this regard, hinting that detailed dissemination strategies for these stakeholder groups might not have been thoroughly elaborated. While the target group of each project, e.g. students, policy-makers, network stakeholders were invited to conferences, informed via policy briefs or benefitted from new resources compiled, community specific dissemination workshops were not mentioned by project staff. Considering that final beneficiaries, such as farmers or marginalised groups of the society might encounter difficulties in reading or understanding information given out by academics, efforts towards preparing and visualising information adequately for these groups should be increased.

To further assess the scope of dissemination, in the following, key mediums, mainly retrieved from qualitative answers shared during in-depth interviews and given in the online surveys are listed. Case Study projects named should be considered as examples, while numerous other projects implement the same or similar dissemination strategies. The document review, eventually, complements this information by quantifying different dissemination channels based on findings from the document review.

- ✓ **Scientific Publications:** Publications are a very common medium to share findings and results. In APPEAR II, thanks to the Open Access strategy, these are freely available and widely shared in the scientific community and among policy-makers. The actual usage remains unclear.
- ✓ **Conferences and Symposiums:** The document review shows that conferences have formed part of numerous projects. For instance, PROSOWO and RESPOND-HER hosted conferences to disseminate findings of the project and establish dialogues with relevant stakeholders in their field.
- ✓ **Books:** During PROSOWO six books on Social Work were compiled, which have been introduced as mandatory literature for university students in the respective countries. Excursus 3 narrates on further dissemination strategies of PROSOWO.
- ✓ **Policy Briefs, Position Papers, Manuals and Guidelines:** the document review shows that many projects drafted manuals, policy briefs and guidelines. While readability of these products is generally high, printed versions of these documents are necessary to reach external stakeholders.
- ✓ **Websites:** All APPEAR projects are showcased on the appear.at website and on the respective institutes' websites. According to the APPEAR office, 9 out of 25 ongoing projects have additional websites. The PROSOWO project, for instance, has created its own domain for the newly established Center for Research and Innovation in Social Work ([CRISOWO](#)) – and thus ensuring continuous knowledge dissemination even beyond project ending.
- ✓ **Social Media:** A *facebook* page, a blog, online newsletter and WhatsApp were mentioned.
- ✓ **Radio, Television and Podcast:** The INEDIS project mentioned that journalists were invited to workshops on community rehabilitation and reported on findings via radio and television.
- ✓ **Stakeholder workshops:** A common format across projects are stakeholder workshops on project-related topics where a broad range of different actors is invited. To illustrate an example: the INEDIS project hosted a workshop on gender-based violence for SwD and invited not only different university departments, but also NGOs, police men, social affairs officer and radio and television journalists.
- ✓ **Summer School:** CapNex is currently planning to set up a summer school for external stakeholders from both Kenya and Uganda on the Energy-Water-Food Nexus topic.
- ✓ **Webinars:** A non-case study project elaborated on their series of webinar to disseminate their findings to important stakeholders involved.

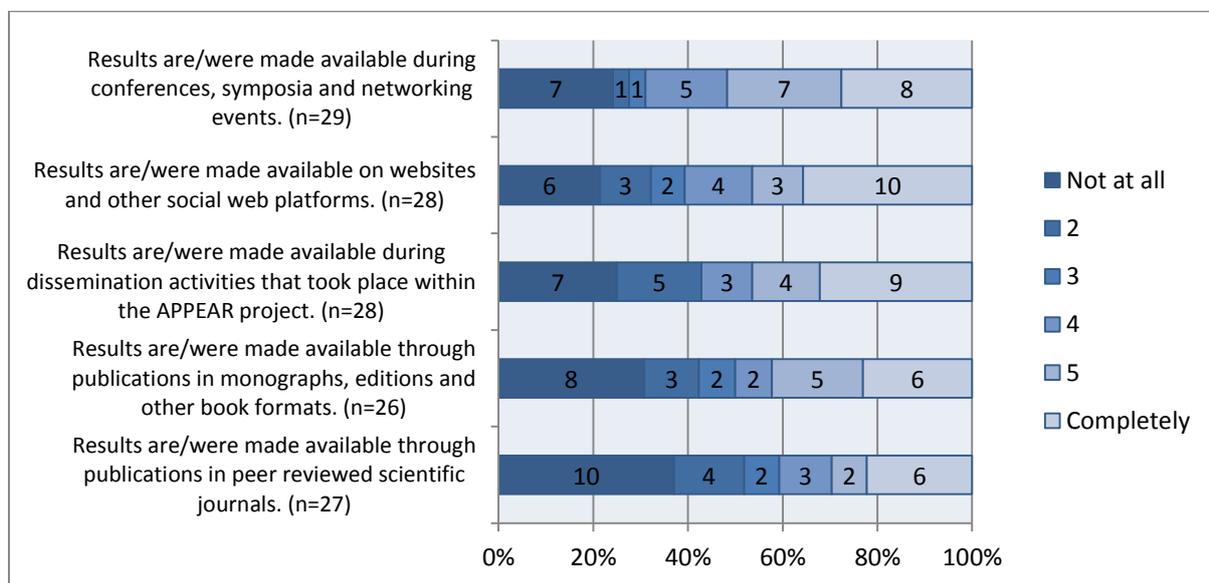
Research of project-bound scholarship holders was made available through conferences and symposia as well as through websites and web platforms. Furthermore, most of the PhD scholars submit their dissertation and subsequently publish their papers in journals. Over 50 % of the survey respondents refer to conferences and symposia as dissemination channels (see Figure 18). Also, dissemination activities within the project and other publications were often used to make research results available. Only scientific journals are quite less common, but one has to take in mind that processes for publishing a paper in a scientific journal take much time and thus still may materialise in the future.

EXCURSUS 3: Beyond knowledge dissemination: Advocacy for the professionalisation of Social WORK in PROSOWO I & II

The degree of disseminating knowledge and creating awareness on the importance of Social Work as a profession is remarkable in PROSOWO I & II. So far, six books were published, including national level publications of each participating country on “The role of SW in poverty reduction and the realisation of MDGs” as well as one transnational publication on “Professional Social Work in East Africa”, which gained international attention and acknowledgement. One more book on indigenous methods in Social Work is planned to be published in November 2018. The books published so far are all used as mandatory literature in course on Social Work at respective partner institutes and beyond.

The project team went beyond academic literature and engaged in advocacy activities throughout the project time line. A first international conference was set up in Rwanda in 2014 and included more than 450 SW academicians and practitioners from all over the world. The annual Social Work Day was celebrated for the first time in East Africa in 2014 during the project’s conference and has been celebrated every year since then. Workshops, trainings and manifestations are part of the annual activities centring around Social Work Day. Eventually, also the Austrian’s counterpart institution initiated the celebration in their hometown. Finally, the project brought SW understanding and methods from East Africa to Austrian institutions by setting up symposia at their home institute. According to observations by project team members, these brought along a change in mindset of attendees at both lecturer and student level, taking away “positive thinking and different attitudes”, as they had never been exposed to different understandings of SW.

Figure 18: Dissemination of results from project-bound scholarship research



Source: Survey of project-bound scholarship holders

Whether the dissemination followed a culturally open-minded approach is difficult to assess without actually participating at dissemination events. A practically oriented approach in sharing and discussing information would be of importance, therefore also information on the guiding principles (chapter 3.1) can be consulted.

3.6.3 *Have there been any unplanned positive / negative side effects?*

The detection of unplanned effects is always tricky. First hurdle is that interviewees and respondents do not always understand the question easily. While in interviews one can further explain what is meant, in a survey more detailed information cannot be provided. Furthermore, project participants are sometimes opposed to the thought that there might be negative side effects from their projects and thus are hesitant to elaborate on this aspect. When undertaking the document review, in this regard unintended effects mentioned only referred to spill over and synergy effects.

Also, in the project team member survey respondents were asked for side effects and also these rather referred to reaching further stakeholders groups or unexpected political discussion which not in the real sense unintended effects. Also in the case study single unplanned positive effects could be identified as well which mostly can be counted as synergy effects or medium-term outcomes triggered by the capacity development. While the project was still running, Dilla University of the INEDIS project achieved to gain further funds for setting up a PhD program in Community Based Rehabilitation, which directly builds on the activities pursued by the APPEAR project. In Austria, project partners mentioned that they intensified their skills in project management, partnership development or intercultural cooperation – something they did not necessarily expect but took for granted before. Furthermore, at TU Vienna development research has not yet been strongly rooted. The CapNex team attempts to foster the same and initiated an extracurricular lecture series on action-oriented development research – thus engaging in advocacy to support the area of development-focused research within the rather technically-oriented university.

3.6.4 *To which specific SDGs do the projects contribute – even if not explicitly defined in their application?*

This question is only relevant for projects from 2015-2016 onwards as the SDGs were established in 2015. We will check this for all projects starting in the second half of 2016, as from then on project staff might have been aware of the development process of new global goals on development as successors of the Millennium Development Goals. The first appearance we find in documents of a project starting in September 2016. In total 15 projects started after this date and six (40%) of them refer to the SDGs in their applications.²⁴

Reference was made to SDG 1: No poverty (2), SDG 3: Good health and well-being (1), SDG 4: Quality education (2), SDG 5: Gender equality (3), SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy (1), SDG 8: decent work and economic growth (1), SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities (2), SDG 13: climate action (1) and SDG 15: Life on land (1). Therefore, we find that SDGs are only integrated by few projects (6, 40%) and the SDGs are not much formalised in APPEAR projects.

The contribution to SDGs cannot really be assessed by the evaluation as SDGs are not systematically integrated into the project documents and project implementation. Instead, the online survey inquired about the perceived association to different SDGs.

Retrospectively, all respondents attach their project to one SDG (6 respondents), two SDGs (11 respondents) or three SDGs (57 respondents) as requested in the survey of project team members. Project staff of all projects were asked this question, including also those from projects that were implemented before the establishment of the SDGs in 2015. As Figure 19 shows, by far the most nominations achieve SDG 4 - *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong*

²⁴ Further documents are for most of these projects not available yet.

learning opportunities for all, SDG 1- End poverty in all its forms everywhere, SDG 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and SDG 2 - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Figure 19: Perceived association of project to SDGs



Source: Online survey of project team members

Conclusively, the main programme objective of strengthening capacities of higher education and contribute to poverty reduction is quite well reflected in the answers of the respondents. However, in both cases only between 40 and 50 % of the respondents mention these two SDGs in the centre of the programme objective.

3.7 Sustainability

3.7.1 To what extent does the project contribute to the sustainable development of institutional (and individual) capacities and to the improvement of scientific-academic and/or teaching potential at the institution?

The contribution to the generation of transnational and transcultural spaces of knowledge as result of their project is rated highest with an average rate of 5.16 by project team members in comparison with other impacts. Moreover, the facilitation of long-term academic partnerships is rated quite high, but significantly higher rated in ongoing projects than in completed projects. Potential reasons are that team members of completed projects might already have experienced that academic partnerships do not always persist, leading to lower ratings given in this regard. The contribution to poverty reduction is also relatively highly rated in comparison to the strengthening of the scientific dialogue. Still, partner staff of the Global South perceives a significantly higher contribution in their countries than staff from Austria.

Table 4: Perceived long-term outcomes and impacts

Statement	No. of respondents	Average rating	Standard deviation	Sign.	Type of respondents
The project has contributed to the generation of transnational and transcultural spaces of knowledge.	70	5.16	1.15		all
The project facilitated the creation of long-term academic partnerships.	70	5.11	1.25		all
	53	5.42	0.84	***	ongoing
	17	4.18	1.78		completed
The project has the potential to contribute to poverty reduction and other national development goals.	72	4.90	1.20		all
	56	5.07	1.09	**	ongoing
	16	4.31	1.40		completed
The project has strengthened the scientific dialogue in our country.	69	4.19	1.53		all
	36	3.81	1.62	**	Austria
	33	4.61	1.32		Partner country

Source: Online survey of project team members. Note: Rating on agreement to statements from 1 to 6, where 1 = I do not agree at all & 6 = I agree completely. Subgroups are only shown when significant differences were detected. Significance level: *** 1% significance level, ** 5% significance level

Furthermore, respondents were asked to list expected long-term impacts. While many of these impacts are also at outcome level we present below a categorisation of the different aspects (except mentions on output level). The two most mentioned impacts refer to an improved scientific-academic collaboration (15) or teaching potential (17). Another eighteen entries refer to increased institutional (9) and individual capacities (9). Improved lives of final beneficiaries are mentioned by 11 respondents, describing best what could be considered as development impact. Further, ten respondents mention the projects' contribution to the national discussion and policy development as a long-term outcome. The distribution of mentioned impacts shows that the focus is rather on the academic sector and less connected to society or politics.

Furthermore, also the case studies refer rather to the academic sector achievements with regard to impact. Indeed, evidence was found in case study projects that capacities were developed that contribute to the **strengthening of institutions** in a sustainable way. However, the impact among institutions involved varies. The evaluation poses the hypothesis that considering the nature and scope of APPEAR projects, the most significant impact is achieved at institutes or with persons involved that have not yet had any or only few other international cooperation projects. This was repeatedly reflected in the interviews of case study projects. Widespread impact could, for instance, be recognised at Dilla and Gondar University of the INEDIS project and at partner institutes in Rwanda and Burundi of PROSOWO. The comparably small project volume enables relatively new or less experienced project partners to gain such experience, and it assures high commitment and ownership among them. At some elite universities that count with multiple international projects at the same time, the impact of APPEAR might be more limited due to high competition with other donor projects that offer more attractive remunerations and project volumes.

Looking at case study results, one impact which was repeatedly reported was the **creation of networks** that sustained beyond the project and led to repeated collaborations of the involved actors.

Discussions with APPEAR alumni showed their **engagement in research and teaching** at their home institute. Three TRANSACT scholars now work at the Universities of Gondar and Bahir Dar and apparently pass on their acquired capacities to students during bachelor and master courses. However, this holds not true for all alumni. Project staff explained that single alumni do not return to their home institutes, have left their country or now work for international NGOs or consultancies.

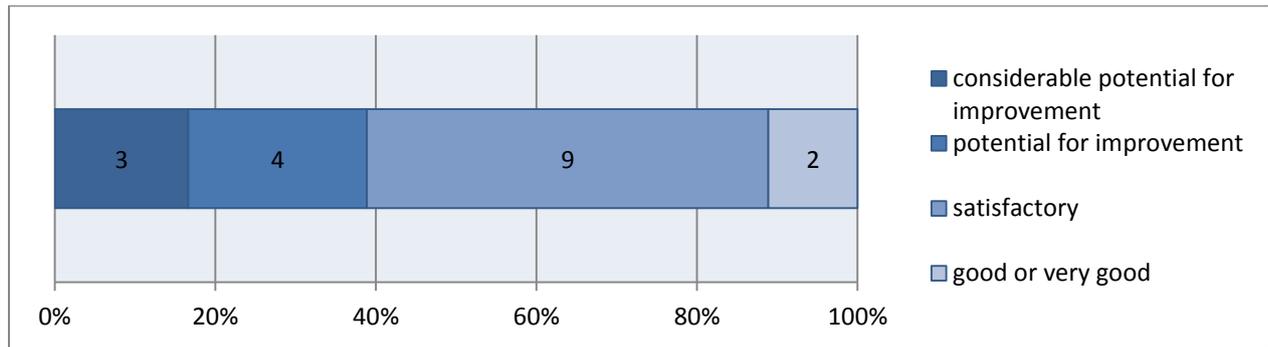
There are also projects that have not led to outcomes because not all activities could be finished until the end of the implementation period and activities stopped directly afterwards. For example, in BIOREM the established Master's programme, stopped once the project was over because of lacking commitment to the topic by the university management. Furthermore, formerly involved institutions and persons are not cooperating anymore. Therefore, future outcomes and impacts cannot be expected.

3.7.2 To what extent are the outcomes likely to continue beyond the end of the project?

To answer the question, different data sources are considered. In a first step, applications and final reports of completed projects were assessed as to documenting concrete measures and successes for sustainability of results²⁵. Only two projects (2 of 18, 11 %) were assessed as "good" or "very good" in this regard (see Figure 20). Among those, evidence for a very good planning was found in the application, and the final reports showed successes like the continuation of funding for a Master's programme by the university. Half of the projects (8 of 18, 44 %) are assessed as satisfactory, presenting some concrete results with respect to sustainability, e.g. financial commitments by institutions or institutionalisation of a newly developed policy. Four projects refer only rather generally to sustainability in their final report with only few indications, such as project proposals or further meetings. Three projects merely include intentions but no tangible measures or achievements.

²⁵ On a four-step scale, the planning of sustainability was rated as "good or very good" if concrete and successes were visible in the final report. It was rated as "satisfactory" if it contained several good measures and a relatively concrete planning. If only less concrete measures and results were reported, it was rated as with "potential for improvement" and with "considerable potential for improvement" if no concrete measures neither in planning and more importantly not in the final report were documented.

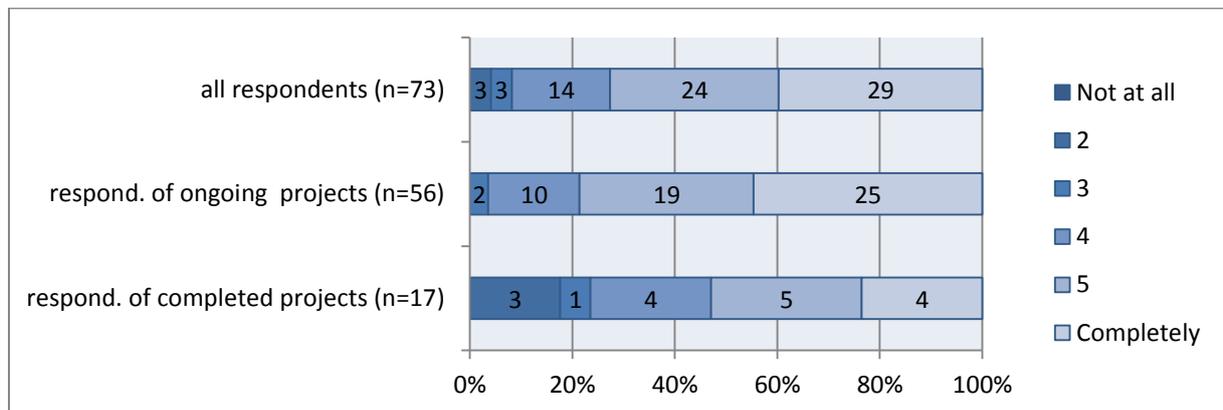
Figure 20: Concrete measures and successes for sustainability of results



Source: Document review

Figure 21 shows that, in general, 67 % of the respondents rather expect the benefits of the project to continue (Likert rating of 5 or 6). However, only 40 % expect them to continue completely. There is a difference between ongoing and completed projects with completed projects giving less positive assessments.²⁶

Figure 21: Perceived continuation of benefits



Source: Online survey of project team members

What are the potential reasons? In table 8, key aspects for sustainability in terms of resources were assessed by project staff. Results show that in partner countries both, sufficient academic and administrative staff is involved to continue project outcomes. In Austria, average ratings given are much lower, with the difference being statistical significant. Yet, it was mentioned that motivation and interest of selected project staff is of utmost importance to carry on the momentum of the project. Financial resources receive much lower average ratings, hinting that they are not sufficiently available to continue with the outcomes. In this regard projects differ substantially. In some partnerships, the higher university management took ownership to finance outcomes, such as Master programmes. In others academic programmes, implemented during the project, directly stopped after funding ended. One project team demands assistance and consultancy to formulate exit strategies and to improve measures for sustainability, which should be jointly defined.

Eventually, sustainability at beneficiary level poses challenges to APPEAR projects, especially for the ones with a strong research-oriented character, as issuing policy briefs or setting up one-time con-

²⁶ It has to be taken into account that the subgroup of respondents from completed projects is relatively smaller and that a bias can be easier introduced. For example, there is a larger number of Austrian respondents in this group that might have a different view on the projects than respondents from partner countries. Still the difference can be detected between ongoing and completed projects when controlling for this possible bias.

ferences might not be sufficient to ensure that results are translated into action. One TRANSACT project member narrates as follows:

“Sustainability is in question for this project and many other projects in general. If research results are implemented, then there will be changes, but unfortunately this is not very much part of the culture, which is rather top-down. Who will take on the responsibility?” – TRANSACT, project staff

3.7.3 *To what extent are acquired capacities and achievements that are attributed to the project, incorporated in the institutions structure, curricula, methods, etc., e.g. is the knowledge also applied? What are favourable or hindering factors?*

Table 5 contains different statements which respondents of the survey of project team members were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 6, to display their degree of agreement on the institutionalisation, i.e. the use of project results in research, in teaching as well as in curricula drafting/revision. Partner countries rate the degree of institutionalisation higher than Austrian partners with differences being statistically significant across all three aspects, hinting that partners in the south made better use of results in their work and at the same time also confirming the ‘development cooperation’ character of the APPEAR projects where mainly the needs of the institutions and countries in the South are addressed.

Table 5: Agreement on institutionalisation of results

Statement	No. of respondents	Average rating	Standard deviation	Significance level	Type of respondent
Our institution has used project results to strengthen the institution’s research activities.	65	4.65	1.34		all
	32	5.13	1.07	***	Partner country
	33	4.18	1.42		Austria
Our institution has used project results in teaching methods and teaching capacities.	62	4.63	1.61		all
	31	5.26	1.09	***	Partner country
	33	4.03	1.81		Austria
Our institution has used project results in the institution’s curricula.	63	4.35	1.68		all
	32	5.22	0.97	***	Partner country
	31	3.45	1.79		Austria

Source: Online survey of project team members. Note: Rating on agreement to statements from 1 to 6, where 1 = I do not agree at all & 6 = I agree completely. Subgroups are only shown when significant differences were detected. Significance level: *** 1% significance level, ** 5% significance level

Excursus 4 further illustrates how projects outcomes have been institutionalised at partners involved.

EXCURSUS 4: TRANSACT – Planting the seed of inter- and trans-disciplinary research in Ethiopian higher education and research institutions

While the TRANSACT project faced several challenges during the project implementation, evidence was found that substantial outcomes continued beyond project ending. All interviewees involved in the data collection actively used and narrated about the key concepts (inter- and transdisciplinary) and method (scenario planning) acquired during the project and stated that they continue to apply them in their own research and teaching. Specific examples on application and usage of knowledge gained include the following:

A course in scenario planning, the principal method TRANSACT PhD students were focusing on during their dissertation research, forms part of the Master’s programme on “Rural transformation”, which was set up as part of TRANSACT at the UoG. An APPEAR PhD alumna is teaching the course. A former project partner who is now director of a federal research institute in agriculture stated to have adopted action- and development-oriented research approaches during the TRANSACT project and currently supervises six action-oriented research projects at the institute he works at. According to lecturers at the UBD, the idea and concepts of inter- and transdisciplinary are “passed on to thousands of students” during their teaching. Eventually, one APPEAR PhD alumnus pursues practically-oriented teaching by – jointly with other departments and stakeholders – setting up a model farm at the University.

Case studies allowed to retrieve several supportive and hindering factors for sustainability. For activities to sustain and outcomes to be institutionalised, the **inclusion of local stakeholders** appears crucial. For instance, the STRECAFISH project, when implementing model fish farms, integrated the zonal administration and technical officers of the region from the very beginning to achieve ownership among them and retrieve their on-site support for the farmers during and beyond the project period. As farmers can, if required, approach these experts or the involved research institute itself, the fish ponds and their related benefits for the community are likely to sustain. CapNex plans to integrate relevant institutions in the study region and plant knowledge on the Water-Energy-Food Nexus within this institutional network.

Furthermore, partnerships with external stakeholders should be formalised in **MoUs** to foster commitment between the partners. STRECAFISH set up an agreement with Fishery institutions for the practically oriented Master course that lasts beyond the project. Efforts now need to go into negotiations to convince these partners about mutual benefits when enabling students’ field visits and preventing them from asking for a remuneration for their services.

“One limiting factor is that I am worried if stakeholder will demand some contribution to participate. Right now, they are trying to convince them that this is of mutual benefits, as the students will advise, solve problems through research and be a potential qualified staff. We want to remove the sentence on money paid to the institutes from the MoU.” – Project Partner STRECAFISH

Confirmed throughout different stakeholder groups, **project-bound scholars** are key for sustainability of the project, given that they return to their home country. Out of 32 APPEAR scholars who participated in the survey, ten have already completed their programme and 22 are current APPEAR scholars. Almost all scholarship holders are committed to work on the topic in their home country in the

future (Yes: 29, No: 1, Not sure: 2). All but one of the current scholarship holders plan to be part of the network in the future. Out of the ten APPEAR alumni, who participated in the survey, eight returned to their home country and six work at their home university. Seven out of ten alumni are still active in the APPEAR network and are, on average, in touch with six persons of the network.

Indeed, during the FGD current scholarship holders showed high motivation to become changemakers within their country and system and pass on their acquired skills. In the TRANSACT project the majority of APPEAR alumni now teaches and works in its home institutes. Similarly, the APPEAR scholarship holder of PROSOWO I now belongs to the core team of PROSOWO II in Uganda. Exceptions do exist with some APPEAR alumni looking for better opportunities in Europe or North America or engaging in international NGOs or UN organisations, who often offer attractive remuneration in the country. In Nicaraguan case studies it became evident, that the connection between scholarship holders and the project team was detected to be quite low and a prolongation of benefits cannot necessarily be expected. The following quote elaborated on context-related challenges in this regard:

“Challenges include that some abandon the program and look for job opportunities in Europe. This is also because, e.g. in Ethiopia the situation is less stable. Lastly some private employers are very rigid and scared that the scholarship holders will take up their position.” – Project coordinator, STRECAFISH

Some academic institutions have set up **contractual arrangements** to provide additional support to scholarship holders and prevent brain drain upon completion: Additional financial contributions are given to the scholarship holder, especially to support their families in the home countries, based on the agreement that scholars commit themselves to work for two to four years at their home institute once they complete their higher degree. This arrangement was appreciated by all APPEAR scholars involved, since it enabled them to on the one hand support their families at home and on the other hand gain security about an employment once their return. Only a few cases were reported where scholars bought themselves out of the agreement to leverage on other opportunities.

Eventually, once projects are ending, it is beneficial to have an either **physical or digital platform** where project information can still be accessed and future collaboration can be based at. The PROSOWO project excels here by setting up the CRISOWO and receiving acknowledgment of the centre through MoUs of project partner institutions.

“The centre was established and now it depends on further collaboration and continuity of funding to get off the feed. Our dream is to convert the centre into a research hub for SW in East Africa. It represents a concrete mechanism for sustainability and gives opportunities to establish further partnerships.” – PROSOWO Project Partner

3.8 Gender

The following chapter adopts all evaluation questions related to gender.

3.8.1 Has the contribution to the project design, the implementation and the achievements of results been equally among women and men in the project team – on the institutional level and on the level of the pre-defined beneficiaries – in the eligible countries as well as in Austria, among South partners and Austrian partners, among young and established/ more experienced researchers?

This question can be answered only partially by data collected during the evaluation. In the document review, the gender of team leaders is analysed, while for further stakeholders the results rely on case study interviews.

Most APPEAR projects are coordinated by male project coordinators (31 projects, 72 %) while only 12 (28 %) have a female project coordinator (see Figure 22). However, the timeline of projects funded between 2010 and 2018 shows that in the programme phase of APPEAR I (2010-2014) 59 % projects were led by a male coordinator and 41 % by a female one. By the time of APPEAR II (since 2015), the percentage of projects with female coordinators had declined to 19 %. This means that within 8 years the number of male coordinators had increased by 22 percentage points (see table).

Figure 22: Gender of project coordinator positions

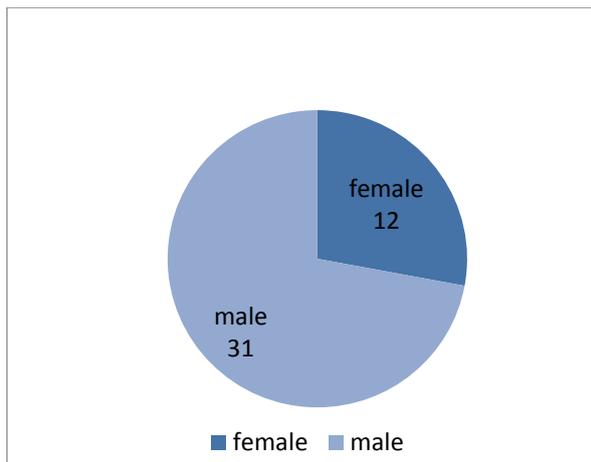
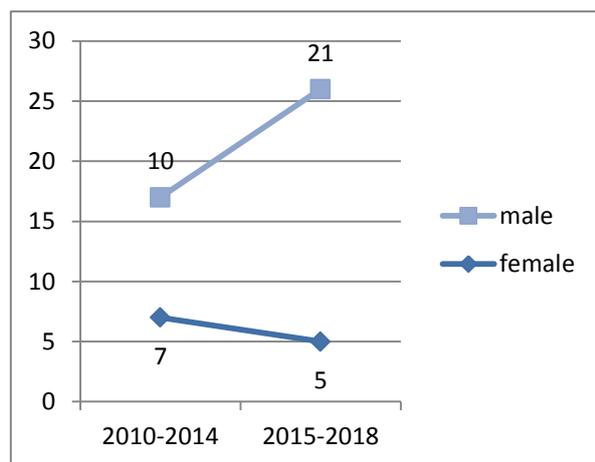


Figure 23: Development of coordination position by gender



When looking at gender mainstreaming beyond project staff, case studies revealed that at beneficiary level, in trainings and workshops with the community, importance was placed on integrating both men and women, often to equal parts. Yet, internal awareness on this issue had to be raised over time in some projects. In TRANSACT and CapNex feedback during the first review was received that gender topics are not integrating sufficiently. Also, STRECAFISH underwent an important learning in this regard. While the first training in model villages to set up small-scale fish farms was directed to men who would supposedly be in charge of maintenance of fish ponds, it was soon noticed that women play a much more important role:

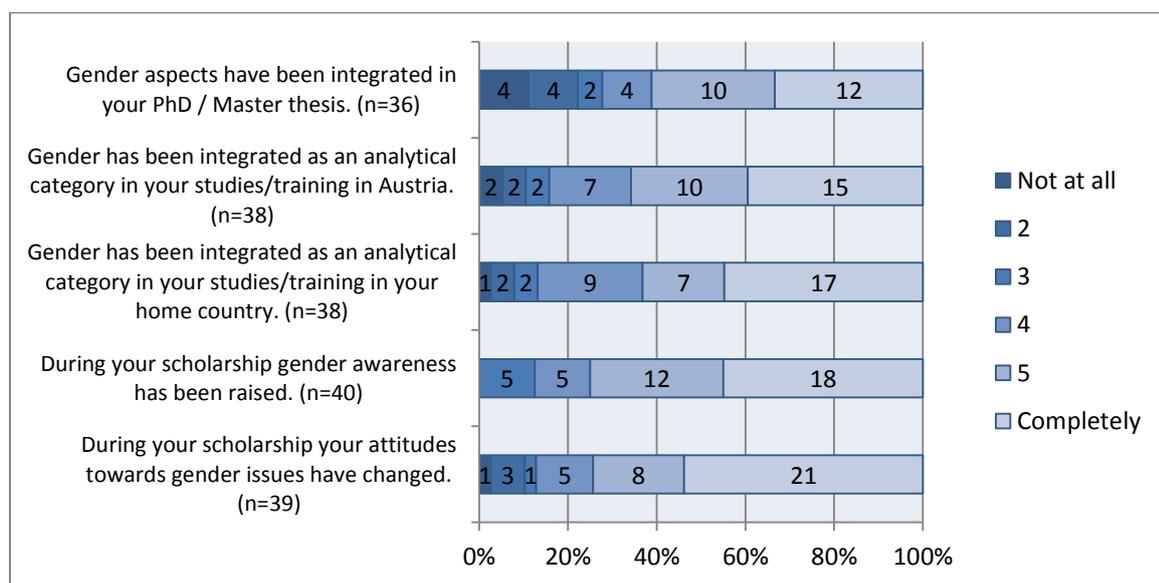
“A gap in training was identified, as in the first training only men attended. But no one knew how to prepare the fish. That is why in the second training mothers and children were included: day one was a theoretical training and day two was on practical issues such as harvesting, preparing and cooking the fish. Several dishes were shown that found great acceptance.”

– Project team member STRECAFISH

It can be further examined whether there are differences in Austria and partner countries in the South. Notably, one Austrian team member took up a rather critical voice, claiming that “in Austria this topic is more on the side, one is not really there with the heart. Africa is much better developed here.” Team members from other projects also articulated that gender mainstreaming is quite advanced at Social Science and Education departments in Ethiopia and often lacks attention in Austria.

Eventually, gender perspectives of project-bound scholarship holders shall be examined in Figure 24. The majority of respondents share positive answers regarding the integration of gender aspects in their study and training both in Austria and in their home countries. 33 % of students has integrated gender issues in their PhD / thesis (5 and 6 on Likert), while 22 % have barely or not at all considered the gender perspective in their dissertation. The majority states that during the scholarship gender awareness was raised (75 %) and that their attitudes changed (74 %).

Figure 24: Assessment of gender aspects for scholarship holder



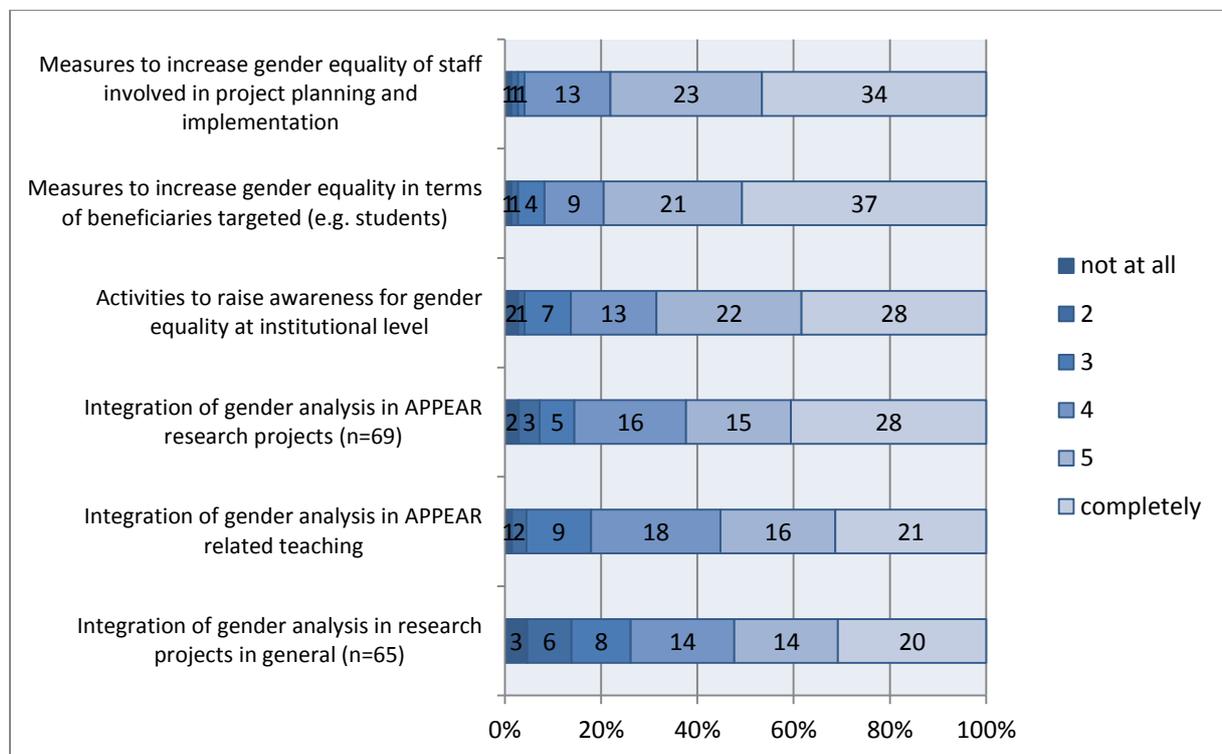
3.8.2 *To what extent was gender mainstreaming included in the project, gender awareness raised, attitudes towards gender changed, gender considered as analytical category in research and teaching?*

Gender mainstreaming is one key component of APPEAR projects, promoted and described in detail in the guideline for applications and thus accordingly in project documents. In the document review four different aspects were analysed, i.e. (i) measures for increasing female working for/in the project, (ii) measures for increasing the number of female beneficiaries, (iii) reference to including gender topics in curricula and/or research and (iv) lastly if the logical framework includes some gender aspects either in the formulation of results or objectives or in the indicators. Aspects (i)-(iii) we analysed on basis of the chapter “influence on the opportunity of women”, the last aspect on basis of the logical frameworks provided. The document review shows most often presented in the application are measures to increase the number of female beneficiaries with respect to the study programmes, training and workshops. Thirty-seven of 43 projects (86 %) refer to this kind of measures as e.g. to determine percentages of female participants. Thirty-two of 43 projects (74 %) refer to measures regarding curricula or research. Furthermore, 27 of 43 projects (63 %) refer to measures for increasing the number of females working in the project team or as teachers for the project. Thus, with respect to these results we can clearly confirm that more than half of the projects are

gender sensitive. When checking the logical framework for references to gender aspects, it can be found that reference is made in about half of the projects (20 of 43, 47 %) ²⁷.

The actual implementation of measures to increase gender equality over the course of the project has been perceived by team members in the survey more positive in contrast to the document review. Still, the ranking of the different measures by the respondents points to the inclusion of the aspects according to documents. The respondents perceive mostly measures to increase gender equality in staff and beneficiaries targeted included in the project. Over 90 % of the respondents rate the top three categories in this regard (see Figure 14). The second most commonly implemented measures according to their perception are activities to raise awareness for gender equality at institutional level and gender analysis integrated in APPEAR research projects. The lowest ratings in this regard receive integration of gender analysis into teaching and in research in general but still more than 70 % see these relatively well included. The ratings from the survey reflect a very high integration of gender measures in all aspects even though the impression from other data sources is rather mixed.

Figure 25: Perceived inclusion and implementation of gender issues (n=73)



Source: Online survey of project team members

The case studies confirm that gender mainstreaming varies substantially across projects, disciplines and regions. In most projects located within Social Science or Education departments, gender mainstreaming is incorporated throughout. In the INEDIS project, focus of one project component at the UoG is placed on female SwD and gender-based violence. Awareness across departments is raised on the same during workshops and events, where different departments, NGOs and even journalists are invited. Research is currently conducted by both Austrian researchers and the project-based PhD scholar. At AAU 38 % of SwD are female, which is high above the national average, and learnings on how to achieve better opportunities for female SwD are shared with the Inter-Ethiopian university

²⁷ Appearance of a disaggregated indicator was already counted as positive, though only few project applications integrate gender more thoroughly in their logical framework.

network as well as with the Austrian counterpart. Lastly, the project team goes one step further and calls for an “inclusion strategy” which should replace the current APPEAR gender mainstreaming strategy. In more technical disciplines, gender is regarded one-dimensional by some project partners during implementation, only referring to the composition of the project team. It is perceived as burdensome, since in some disciplines it is very difficult to engage female researchers or staff. Gender is not yet considered sufficiently in research, teaching and during the implementation of community activities. CapNex, TRANSACT and Project 99 show weaknesses in this regard, failing to achieve the inclusion of gender as an analytical category in the research conducted and considering gender in activities implemented. Yet, this does not necessarily hold true for all projects located in Technical or Natural Sciences. Excursus 5 shows how STRECAFISH, a project stemming from the men-dominated science of Fisheries, thoroughly incorporated gender mainstreaming throughout its activities.

EXCURSUS 5: Gender mainstreaming in STRECAFISH

The fishery sector is still a largely men-dominated arena – both in the Global North and South. Fish, however, is a very important product for both income generation and nutrition and in the latter, mostly women play a role in retrieving nutritious food for their family. Yet, they are often the ones most marginalised in the value chain of the fish sourcing and managing process. The STRECAFISH project acknowledged this issue jointly with key stakeholders and achieved to integrate gender aspects throughout its activities:

In the newly developed MSc curricula in Fisheries, a course on gender equality in fishing has been incorporated at Makerere University by collaborating with the School of Gender and Women Studies of the same university.

“I expect that not all students will understand why there is a course on gender in this programme and some might think at the beginning that it is not the right thing. But in the end, they will understand that Gender is not only about women”. – Senior Lecturer, School of Gender and Women Studies

To ensure gender-sensitivity at grassroots level, the project joint hands with the Women Fish Network, a local association, which aims at strengthening participation of women in fisheries. The network is in charge of implementing trainings in the field on fish feeding practices. 60 % of participants were female in the first training.

Lastly, part of the project team, including a male APPEAR PhD scholarship holder, currently examines the role of women in small-scale fishing in Ethiopia.

4. Conclusions & Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The evaluation team's main conclusion is that APPEAR projects subject to this study generate an added value and induce change within their contexts. Partners from Austria and the Global South work eye-to-eye on projects that matter in their research field and context and contribute to solutions for sustainable development. The following section presents and discusses the conclusions on the respective claims made based on the findings of the previous chapter.

The first claim centred around the APPEAR programme's key **principles**: The evaluation found that the majority of partnerships adopted a participatory approach in designing and implementing projects. Hereby, two intrinsic characteristics of the programme support participation of all actors involved: Firstly, the Preparatory Funding was highlighted several times to establish a sound base between project partners and jointly take crucial decisions regarding the proposal. Secondly, the leadership of Southern partners as main coordinators additionally fostered participation and ownership among partner institutions. Similarly, adopting a bottom-up and demand-driven approach can be considered as sufficiently achieved, further fostered by need assessments conducted during the project time line. Evidence for culturally and empirically open-minded knowledge exchange between all institutions is found in more than half of the projects. Nevertheless, Austrian institutions are often not explicitly included as recipients of knowledge within the logical framework of the projects. However, the question remains valid if the integration of knowledge transfer into the logical framework is deemed necessary for a concept of culturally open-minded knowledge as the overall structure of the programme rather targets the improvement of capacities of institutions in the South which is in contrast to knowledge transfer in both directions. Therefore, the overall perception of Austrian institutions that they gain as well from the partnership – at times “only” with respect to intercultural aspects” – might be considered as sufficient to meet the principle.

An empirical orientation in research studies or within developed/revised Master's programmes is found across all projects. While practical orientation is relatively high as well, about one third of the projects do not refer to this issue to a satisfying extend.

While the added values are not obligatory for APPEAR projects, most projects refer to the ADC country strategy in their application documents. Nevertheless, for an actual alignment of activities, frequent exchange with ADC staff in the country might be of higher importance. Weak evidence for coordination and alignment efforts can be found. Disability mainstreaming is a newly integrated added value in the APPEAR II phase. Most projects are not (yet) disability mainstreamed with only four describing a disability mainstreaming strategy comprehensively. More than half of the projects are relatively well aware of the integration of young academics the focus and describe measures how to support this aspect. Still, the age distribution of project teams does not sufficiently reflect the focus on young team members. Hereby, projects are facing a trade-off between promoting young researchers, while considering that more established researchers might have networks to build on and influential power to reach the higher management level at universities, which might be necessary to adopts learnings and new structures.

The second claim explored the projects' results-orientation and consideration of programme objectives. The evaluation team builds on the common assumption that logical frameworks are an adequate tool to measure results, supposing that the quality is appropriate. Discussions with stakeholders revealed that logical frameworks are drafted during the application, however, not considered as a

main criterion during the selection. Furthermore, their usage across project teams is generally low. The framework analysis revealed that the quality of logical frameworks is often not adequate. On the one hand, the terminologies applied (“expected results”, “specific objective” and “overall objective”) are not clearly referring to the different levels. On the other hand, a rough quality check revealed a low quality of indicators with indicators not matching the different results levels.

Furthermore, according to the document review, forty percent of the projects do not refer comprehensively to the programme objectives of strengthened capacities in higher education institutions and poverty reduction in their logical framework. Especially the focus on strengthening capacities of higher education institutions could be better integrated into the logical framework and translated into specific outcome level objectives and measurable indicators to ensure programme orientation throughout project implementation.

The third claim focused on the projects’ achievements according to the OECD / DAC criteria. **Relevance**, especially for institutions in partner countries, is rated very high. Evaluation results suggest that they are perceived as less relevant for Austria or Austrian institutions by project team members. However, when examining projects more closely, indeed very different aspects making APPEAR projects very relevant for Austrian institutions can be identified. APPEAR projects face the paradox of being a development cooperation project with main addressees in the partner countries and at the same time having the vision to be a partnership based on mutual learnings and knowledge exchange. Relevance for the development of participating countries as well as beneficiaries is assessed as very high by all stakeholders.

The **effectiveness** of projects is satisfactory. Outputs of APPEAR projects are mostly achieved when the project is completed. Whereas at times single smaller activities are not yet realised when the final report is due, only in few projects major outputs were not achieved. While the document review is not very conclusive on outcomes, other sources clearly highlight outcomes such as e.g. increased capacities of institutions, students, stakeholders and project-bound scholarship holders. Nevertheless, individual capacity development is often more in the focus than institutional capacity development and described with higher gains. A range of different factors influence the achievement of outputs and outcomes. In the case studies project durations, face-to-face meetings, context knowledge, fluent communication, security and political unrests, bureaucratic barriers, commitment of project team members and staff fluctuation were identified as main factors determining results achievement. The feedback with respect to the Preparatory Funding is throughout positive. Project-bound scholarship holders, another distinctive feature of APPEAR, contribute through related research. Still, a share of scholarship holders felt insufficiently involved in project activities, jeopardising sustainability of projects due to lacking ownership towards the cause.

The majority of APPEAR projects is managed **efficiently** thanks to qualities of the main coordinator and adequate coping with difficulties. The distribution of budgets is considered appropriate and the increase of 20 % of budget being disbursed to non-priority countries is appreciated by regional partnerships. A share of Southern project staff assessed the remuneration and field research quota per day substantially lower compared to other donors, international NGOs and multilateral organisations. The cost-benefit ratio is assessed as rather positive by project partners with outcomes exceeding the investments. Administrative efforts are rated as rather high, but support given by the APPEAR Office – especially to facilitate the organisation or implementation of scholarships – is appreciated.

One key **impact** identified is the creation of transnational and transcultural networks of knowledge, which can involve North-South exchange, but also refers to strengthened South-South and regional

networks. Evidence was found that in approximately two thirds of projects these networks are maintained and further collaboration emerges. Especially, the OeAD alumni network was described as being very supportive for further collaborations and research development in the countries.

The evaluation also found evidence that additional impacts occur when main coordination lies in the South. These include empowerment of the coordinating institutions in the South due to increased responsibilities or interinstitutional proximity between institutions in the same country due to increased exchange between main and partner coordinators. Furthermore, some evidence was found that wide impacts occur at partner institutes that are not that much experienced in international collaboration projects. The scope and nature of APPEAR is a well-fit to their capacities and yields potential for long-term changes. APPEAR projects disseminate results widely via different means. These range from more traditional approaches like journal publications (actively supported through the APPEAR Open Access strategy), to books and policy briefs and also include conferences, workshops and trainings. A few APPEAR initiatives mentioned innovative dissemination tools, such as media (television and radio), social media (Facebook, blogs) or the set-up of their own permanent digital or physical platform.

Eventually, the evaluation found that projects team members associate their projects most to (i) SDG 4 - *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*, SDG 1- *End poverty in all its forms everywhere*, (ii) SDG 5 - *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls* and (iii) SDG 2 - *End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture*. Yet reference in project documents or advertising material is barely made suggesting a relatively loose connection to the SDGs.

Looking at **sustainability**, around two thirds of survey respondents perceive that outcomes will continue beyond the projects. While academic and administrative human resources are available – above all in Southern institutions - to carry on the achieved outcomes, financial resources are less secured across projects. One key conclusion in the sustainability dimension is that partners from the Global South give a better assessment of achievements being incorporated into institutional structures, curricula and methods and knowledge being used. Outcomes of APPEAR projects seem to be of better use in priority countries compared to their Austrian counterpart institutions.

Finally, conclusions on the cross-cutting issue of **gender** mainstreaming can be made. Gender issues were examined from different points of views. The document analysis revealed that the majority of project coordinators are male. Survey results show a positive perception of gender measures integrated in projects. In the application documents, however, measures to support gender mainstreaming are included in the narrative part, but there is little reflection in logical frameworks and clear indicators are missing. Case studies also reveal a variation of gender mainstreaming across projects with some projects clearly standing out as good practices and others showing considerable deficiencies in this regard. Austrian project partners, especially from natural sciences or technical disciplines, might need further training in gender-mainstreaming to better integrate the concept and not only refer to complying to a women's quota.

4.2 Recommendations

Project-level Recommendations (Directed to project team members)

Recommendations 1 – 5 are directed to project team members of ongoing and potential future APPEAR projects.

Ongoing projects

Recommendation 1: Involve external stakeholders, such as government officers, related NGOs, community leaders, among others, to the best extent possible in project activities, as they potentially carry on the changes induced at societal level. Thereby, underlying concepts and theories applied by researchers involved that might be very abstract should be translated into tangible and accessible knowledge to ensure that the same language is spoken during stakeholder workshops and consultations.

Recommendation 2: In some projects it remained unclear whether research findings, guidelines or other final products are actually used or implemented. Project teams should thus draw / continue to draw on contextualized approaches to share project-related findings and knowledge. Especially in the Global South, where often the internet is accessed via smart phones, new means of communication, such as Social Media, but also Webinars and Massive Open Online Courses, among others, might yield potential to reach out to further target groups. Moreover, ICT solutions, such as mobile-based monitoring could be explored further. For Austrian project partners the core development objective of the project should be also put as priority. Project teams in Austria should equally advocate their cause within their context and come up with adequate dissemination methods to share project knowledge and results. Lecture series, public stakeholder symposiums, newspaper articles or advocacy measures, as identified in several projects, could be replicated across different projects. Eventually, when disseminating information, APPEAR projects should join the discourse on the Sustainable Development Goals and communicate connections between projects and the 17 goals.

Recommendation 3: A share of project-bound scholarship holders articulated the wish to be more frequently informed about project activities. Project teams should, therefore, try to update and involve current students as much as desired to increase their ownership of the project. Means to inform scholarship holders comprise (i) including them in the email list, (ii) engaging them in conferences, workshops and symposia, (iii) set up a WhatsApp® group to share updates from field work, among others.

Future projects

Recommendations 4: Project teams should allocate time and resources in defining a detailed exit strategy for their project, ideally already at project proposal phase. In some cases, external support and consultancy might be necessary and could be accounted for within the projects' budgeted activities.

Recommendations 5: Draft a logical framework (or any similar tool) that can be realistically applied and that includes SMART indicators. Particular attention should be given to outcome level indicators. It is recommended to also set (learning) targets for the Austrian institution in the logical framework to further strengthen the aspect of mutual knowledge exchange. It is recommended to accommodate time for peer-learning on results-oriented project management, especially for those team members who are inexperienced in that regard, to emphasize on the importance of logical frameworks and related tools.

Programme Level Recommendations (Directed to OeAD / ADA)

In the following recommendations which aim at improving the APPEAR programme are articulated and require further validation in the envisaged programme evaluation.

Recommendation 6: Foster communication and exchange between projects. Learnings on achieving gender mainstreamed projects, results-oriented project management or measures to integrate the community should be broadly shared among project teams to build on the experiences made. OeAD provides comprehensive information on their website through blog posts and podcasts and sets up project presentations. In addition, regional, more informal forums could be set up, where challenges could be discussed and jointly solutions could be found.

Recommendation 7: To further support the OeAD/ APPEAR alumni network, both digital and physical alumni platforms should be set up to foster continued exchange of knowledge and expertise. Alumni of Austrian universities and cooperation projects are yet quite in a niche sector, considering that other donors spend much higher resources on cooperation and mobility projects. OeAD should make use of these tightly knitted links between alumni and support the realization of further initiatives. For example, funding could be provided for supporting – upon application – thematical focused workshops hosted by alumni.

Recommendation 8: Re-discuss the inclusion of the logical framework in the application documents or consider alternative tools to facilitate the illustration of pathways of change. If the logical framework is kept, it is strongly advised to (i) review the terminology used, (ii) pursue a clearer separation of output, outcomes and impact and (iii) foster its usage among project team members.

Recommendation 9: Sustain and extend the two APPEAR intrinsic mechanisms of Preparatory Funding and the option of project coordination by southern partners to achieve high participation and ownership by all actors involved. Further, APPEAR should deliberate on pre-deciding that coordination of AAPs must occur in the South. Seeing success stories from other projects, AAPs seem appropriate to pass on main responsibilities to departments in the South for leveraging on the additional impacts mentioned above.

5. Annex

5.1 Analysis grid

5.2 Applied data collection instruments

5.3 Consulted documents

5.4 Timetables of field visits

5.5 List of persons interviewed

5.6 Terms of Reference

5.7 Project Case Study Assessments

5.8 Survey results

5.9 Additional Tables