

4th MEETING OF ACP MINISTERS OF CULTURE

ACP House, Brussels

7-10 November 2017



PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE ACPCULTURES+ PROGRAMME

Context

1. The Brussels Resolution of 2012 included three areas of commitment: the continuation of the implementation of the Dakar Plan of Action and the ACPCultures+ Programme (Chapter II); building the capacity of ACP cultural operators (Chapter III); and better information flows and movement of culture professionals, as well as cultural products and services at the national, regional, and international level (Chapter IV).
2. The main objectives of the ACPCultures+ cultural cooperation programme, implemented by the ACP Secretariat and funded by the 10th European Development Fund (EDF), are in line with the decisions taken by the ACP Ministers of Culture.
3. The Programme, launched in 2002 for a period of five years, is a continuation of the ACPCultures and ACPFilms programmes funded by the 9th EDF. With a budget of €30 million (twice the budget of previous programmes), it focuses on three specific components, working in synergy:
 - a. Cultural support for cultural projects implemented in ACP countries through a process of calls for proposals;
 - b. The [ACP] Cultural Observatory (set up under the previous programme); and
 - c. Communication.

Component: Grants for Cultural Projects

1. First of all, it is worth noting that the programmes implemented in the context of ACP-EU cultural cooperation are unique, owing to their substantial funding (with grants averaging between €300,000 and €400,000) and the duration of the funded activities (up to three years). The main purpose of this has been to give structure to ACP cultural industries. As a matter of fact, many operators have underscored that the ACPCultures+ Programme grant had a “leverage effect,” helping them to not only increase their visibility and credibility with local, national, and international institutions, but also with the private sector.

2. Regarding the ACPCultures+ Programme, the entire sector (cinema/audiovisual media and other cultural industries) has been covered, as well as all the links in the value chain, namely production, distribution, and training. A new scope of application has also been introduced during the implementation: regulation. Following the two calls for proposals launched in 2011 and 2012, 54 projects have been implemented, for a total of approximately €22 million. Over 200 cultural organisations have taken part in the activities, many of which are run by young ACP professionals. These projects have conducted activities in over 60 Member States and developed partnerships between ACP regions. The South-South transfer of skills has also been encouraged.
3. The specific results expected from the projects funded have met expectations, for the most part: the production of quality ACP cultural goods has been strengthened, thereby encouraging ACP cultural diversity (over 300 works in the area of audiovisual media, music, dance, theatre, architecture, NICTs, etc.); the circulation of ACP cultural goods and services has improved (over 20,000 works promoted and disseminated), particularly with regard to public cultural events in ACP countries, which saw more than 500,000 persons participating (80% of whom are young people); over 20 million people were given access to ACP works and information on projects through video on-demand, radio, television, YouTube, etc.; building both capacity and skills for cultural actors and structures was achieved through training projects, as well as through the implementation of all the other projects (workshops, residencies, etc.) and approximately 7,800 people were trained; the value of ACP cultural heritage has increased, especially through initiatives to safeguard national audiovisual archives and to preserve architectural heritage or even important historical sites. Generally speaking, the projects created jobs in the culture sector and in related sectors (2,500 paid jobs created through the projects).
4. With regard to the participation of women and young people, it is worth noting that the projects have been a springboard for young ACP artistes, technicians, and administrators. The latter have gained very valuable experience and have had an opportunity to create professional networks at the national, regional, and international level. Six thousand (6,000) young people and 3,500 women have been directly involved in the training and production projects, especially as project coordinators, even though their involvement has rarely been as a result of a well thought-out strategy.
5. The sustainability factors identified include the following: wider collaboration with public authorities (Ministries, public bodies, local government). This collaboration, based on dialogue and frequent exchanges, has helped some operators to have their projects become a tangible part of the national cultural landscape, and has also helped to ensure that actions are sustainable (public funding, technical support, and political support). Some advocacy activities have also been funded by the Programme and some beneficiary projects have contributed directly to formulating policies or mechanisms that encourage the development of certain sectors.

6. In general, the projects that have been the most impactful are those where beneficiaries were prioritised: sustainable actions; the sharing of knowledge and skills; the establishment of successful partnerships; the involvement of public authorities; the inclusion of final beneficiaries; adequate and innovative communication; effective human resource and risk management (including funding); and an integrated approach to training and dissemination. Most funded cultural structures were able to develop international activities, increase their markets or their audience, and find new partners.
7. The major problem with monitoring and effectively capitalising on the results is the fact that almost none of the projects have a reference point, as statistical data for culture is rarely available. Sufficient consideration has not been given to formulating realistic objectives and relevant indicators. Furthermore, very few projects have generated the revenue expected based on the activities carried out, as proposals often overestimated the profitability or economic modelling targets. Underfunding of projects was also a major constraint for some beneficiaries who were sometimes faced with substantial cash-flow difficulties, a phenomenon made worse by generally underestimating the skills and human resources needed for the administrative and financial management of contracts.

Component: Cultural Policies

1. The activities of the ACP Cultural Observatory have been ongoing. An online document system with more than 500 references on the sector has been set up; four external studies on important subjects [training, festivals, New Information and Communication Technologies (NICTs), alternative and innovative funding] were launched, a directory of films using ACP-EU funds was created, and many internal analyses were conducted (broadcasting of films funded; impact of projects on women, young people, and minorities; international and ACP funding of the sector; and project and grant management, etc.). In this context, several directories and databases, articles, newsletters, and sheets highlighting certain best practices implemented by beneficiary projects were published on the Programme's website and disseminated to cultural partners and networks. However, the dissemination of tools, analyses, and studies should be increased.
2. In 2015, information and exchange meetings with Cultural Advisors from ACP Embassies and Missions in Brussels were organised in order to share and disseminate the results of the Programme, in particular, the conclusions and recommendations from the studies, directories, and other tools made available to policymakers.

Communication

3. The ACPCultures+ Programme website serves as an international information relay on projects funded and, more generally speaking, on the ACP creative and cultural industries sectors, especially through the publication of newsletters, articles, and opportunities for cultural operators (grants, calls for proposals, festivals, etc.). The Facebook page has approximately 50,000 subscribers, the majority of whom are culture professionals, based primarily in ACP countries. A dozen articles are published on the website every month <http://www.acpculturesplus.eu/?q=en> and shared on social media. Using the “best practices” heading, the results achieved and the impact of beneficiary projects can be rapidly consulted.
4. The Programme has also monitored the implementation of and follow-up on the communication plans of the beneficiary projects. It is worth noting that operators were able to quickly adapt to the new communication tools using the web and social media. They were therefore able to reach new audiences and strengthen their strategic positioning. With limited means but attractive content, actors in ACP countries were able to skilfully exploit the effects of viral marketing through social media, while getting the national media heavily involved. Forty-two (42) sites and platforms were also developed as part of the actions funded.
5. Communication tools were used to disseminate information on the Programme and the projects promoting the role of culture in development at several cultural, political, and ACP and European professional events (DevDays 2016 and 2017, Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government in Port Moresby, in 2016, and ACP-EU joint parliamentary assemblies, festivals, and conferences).
6. The movement of ACP artistes and works was promoted as part of the production, training and dissemination activities conducted by the beneficiary projects of the Programme. The Programme also invited many ACP artistes and professionals to share their experience through conferences and major cultural events in ACP countries and in Europe.