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Sida Decentralised Evaluation

NIRAS Sweden AB

Evaluation of the Baltic to Black Sea Documentary Network 2017–2020

Final Report

Evaluation of the Baltic to Black Sea Documentary Network 2017–2020

Final Report
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

B2B Doc	Baltic to Black Sea Documentary Network
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
EUR	Euro
LGBTQI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, and intersex
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OFF	Oberoende Filmares Förbund
PmP	Producer meet Producer
SEK	Swedish Krone
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
ToR	Terms of Reference
VAT	Value added tax

Preface

This Evaluation of the Sida-supported Baltic to Black Sea Documentary Network (B2B Doc) 2017-2020 was commissioned by Sida's Department for Europe and Latin America in Stockholm. The evaluation took place from February to April 2020 and was conducted by:

- Greg Moran, Team Leader.
- Yaroslava Naumova, Media Expert.

Christina Paabøl Thomsen managed the review process at NIRAS. Ted Kliet provided the quality assurance. Alexandra Åhlén managed the evaluation at Sida's Department for Europe and Latin America.

Acknowledgements

The evaluation team would like to thank all of those who participated in the evaluation and especially Anya Belyaeva (B2B Doc) and Kathy Gaffney (Greg Moran & Associates), without whose administrative help in arranging a multitude of videoconference consultations and discussion groups, we would not have managed.

Executive summary

The current evaluation covers the support provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to the Baltic to Black Sea Documentary Network (B2B Doc) under a project grant covering the period 2017-2020. The evaluation took place from February to April 2020 and, while it faced significant challenges arising from the coronavirus/COVID-19 outbreak, was successfully completed based on videoconference interviews and discussions, available reports, and additional data compiled by the B2B Doc staff.

The current Sida-supported project targets filmmakers in six post-Soviet countries (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). Although it was expected to come to an end in mid-2020, the grant has been extended to end December 2020. The total grant, including the additional funds under the extension, is approximately 20.1m SEK. Although in the process of transitioning to a fully-fledged non-governmental organisation (NGO), the Sida project is still ‘owned’ by and housed in the Oberoende Filmare Förbund (OFF) - an association of Swedish filmmakers that is the signatory to the Sida grant contract. In addition, B2B Doc also provides support to Russian filmmakers, such support is conducted under a separate agreement between Dixit International (which also provides key staff to the Sida project) and the Swedish Institute.

The **overall objective** of the Sida-supported project is: Enhanced interactivity and capacity of the region’s documentary film industry, thus increasing the sustainability of business initiatives and improving conditions for democracy and human rights in the post-Soviet region. The project has three **outcomes** (referred to as ‘main purposes’ in the project proposal), each with its own **objective**:

1. Partnerships: Established relations and partnerships between filmmakers, production companies, film schools, media industry, public institutions and distributors through networking and physical meetings.
2. Understanding and learning the business: Increased knowledge among the cooperation partners on how business and co-production is conducted in a rapidly changing European media market.
3. Democracy and freedom of speech: Enhanced appreciation of the values of democracy, freedom of speech and gender equality in the documentary film business among co-operation partners.

Relevance

The design of the project is based on significant levels of consultation, including during a lengthy inception period of around 18 months, and extensive experience amongst the programme originators in both filmmaking and the region. It is closely aligned with the Strategy for Sweden’s Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe 2014-2020, mindful

of the levels of democracy and human rights in partner countries, and seeks to assist filmmakers to exercise both their right to receive and to impart information in situations where funds are generally not available to independent filmmakers and/or where their right to freedom of expression is constrained by government and societal attitudes. As confirmed by all of those consulted, the project was thus highly relevant at the design stage. The project has only been running for around 22 months and very few significant changes have occurred in partner countries in that period to which the project needed to respond. Nonetheless, it has responded to changes in the overall market such as decreased levels of funding, increasingly nationalistic public broadcasters, and the introduction of increasing numbers of streaming services. And it has had to respond to two ‘internal’ changes: limited desire for the formal working groups proposed in the project proposal and an inability to provide production grants to filmmakers under Sida rules. It has done so admirably and the project has thus remained relevant over time.

Coherence

Although some of the B2B Doc partners provide some funding, training and other support to filmmakers in post-Soviet countries, B2B Doc project targets different countries to those supported by others and is the only project that targets all five of the countries as a ‘group’ and does not overlap with what others are supporting. B2B Doc also builds skills and capacity that allows filmmakers to participate in the activities of partners based in countries with more developed documentary filmmakers. As a result, filmmakers from countries that are not usually considered for such events are able to attend because of the skills and understanding they have acquired from B2B Doc and the project complements rather than overlapping with the support provided by others. There are no similar Sida-supported projects or programmes focused on the Eastern European region. When it comes to Sida support being provided by Embassies, the only funds being provided to anything related to B2B Doc is funding from the Embassy in Kyiv to the Docudays Festival. Given that the Docudays Festival is a close partner for B2B Doc, such support complements that provided by Sida headquarters.

Effectiveness

Most of the activities related to **‘Partnerships’** in the results frameworks have been conducted. B2B Doc has participated in awareness raising activities at 50 festivals; 35 workshops on various topics have been provided, reaching 211 participants; B2B Doc has participated in 13 festivals in countries other than target countries; and 66 travel grants have been made to filmmakers to attend events and festivals in countries other than their own. In addition, the network has grown considerably, a website and Facebook page have been developed that are regularly updated, and at least 17 projects have been able to find co-producers for their films. As a general rule, other than the establishment of formal working groups that were not supported and workshops for local networks, guilds and producers that were dropped from the current project, B2B Doc has met or exceeded all ‘targets’ in the original project proposal.

B2B Doc has performed well when it comes to the second outcome for the project: **understanding and learning the business**. 10 Seminars on professional standards

have been held, including three webinars; 26 Workshops on professional standards for B2B Doc filmmakers have been conducted, reaching 274 participants (109 men and 165 women); and three flagship Producer meet Producer (PmP) events have taken place at the Docudays Festival in Ukraine, where 67 B2B Doc filmmakers have met with 57 decision-makers from a range of countries outside of those targeted by the project. Smaller PmP events have also been held in Sweden, Estonia and the Netherlands. The outcome of these PmP events is very impressive and 17 co-productions have resulted between B2B Doc filmmakers and producers from Estonia, Germany, Japan, Lithuania, Belgium, Romania, Serbia, France, Latvia, Poland and Russia.

In the area of **democracy and freedom of speech**, most if not all of the projects supported by B2B Doc have a focus on democracy and human rights, including freedom of expression and gender equality. It was also widely reported by filmmakers and partners in particular that B2B Doc supports films that would not otherwise be made because they deal with controversial and sensitive issues. B2B Doc has established relationships with 18 other organisations, including the Human Rights Film Network, and was invited to attend the Impact Day at the International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights that was scheduled to take place in Geneva in March 2020 but cancelled as a result of COVID-19. It is also in the process of establishing a relationship with Good Pitch, a British project supporting documentary filmmakers with a focus on human rights, and aims to bring Good Pitch to B2B Doc target countries in the future. However, although it plans to do so, it has not yet developed formal relationships with NGOs and organisations promoting democracy and human rights/freedom of expression, such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace and Human Rights Watch.

Based on its performance, B2B Doc is adjudged as largely effective. However, measuring effectiveness is significantly hampered by the absence of a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. M&E is largely *ad hoc* and key data such as what progress filmmakers have made in securing additional funding and what they have been able to do with the support and capacity building provided are not sought or kept. There is also no specific staff member dedicated to M&E and separate reports are prepared, by different members of management, for Sida and for the Swedish Institute. The result is plain to see in the reports to Sida (also noted by the Swedish Institute) that are not against project indicators and do not provide Sida with sufficient detail on what results the project has achieved. Just as importantly, key data are not available to B2B Doc for it to measure its progress and to plan or amend its strategy and/or activities if required. Although B2B Doc is planning to conduct a baseline survey as part of the preparation for a future phase of the project, the report notes that such a study, while important, will not substitute for a proper and robust M&E system.

Efficiency

Although the current evaluation is not a value for money evaluation, and while both Sida and the Swedish Institute note that financial reporting has been weak, the report includes an overview of expenditure under the project. Based on this, it is clear that

project management and quality control, and costs for workshops, events and marketing consume the largest proportion of the budget. A significant proportion of funds is also used for travel and accommodation, venue hire etc. for participants at B2B Doc events and to attend festivals and pitching sessions, but costs in this area are kept to a minimum (economy class travel and accommodation at reasonably priced hotels). As a result, and based on available financial data, the costs of the project appear to be commensurate with the level of results. Of some concern though is that the project appears from available reports to be underspending. While this is most likely a result of financial reports reporting expenditure against the budget (rather than against income), and while any ‘unspent’ funds have reportedly been absorbed and used during year 3 (not covered by the current evaluation), the COVID-19 outbreak can be expected to result in underspending during the final period of the project as some activities are delayed, cancelled or implemented differently. And although both B2B Doc and Sida are taking measures to mitigate against any delays between the current project and a new phase (such as completing the narrative report and audited financial report before the project comes to an end), a lag can also be anticipated between the end of the current funding from Sida and the start of any new grant.

When it comes to efficiency generally, there have been no delays in funding from Sida and none of those consulted mentioned any delays in organising activities, travel or the like for filmmakers. But while the project is relatively efficiently implemented, some concerns were raised around the delay in funding between the end of the inception period and the start of the project (which, it is noted, is inevitable but which B2B Doc did not appear to understand at the time). The project also had to contend with a change in its value-added tax exemption that led to less funds being available for activities. Steering documents developed with Sida funding are aimed at OFF and will need to be amended to remain relevant to the new B2B Doc NGO, and it is not always clear to Sida (or the evaluators) who is responsible for what in B2B Doc, particularly when it comes to the two founding members and, more recently, when it comes to the new Chairperson. The current Board also mirrors the project management team. While that is often the case with new NGOs, it is not best practice: the role of a Board is essentially to oversee the work of an organisation and, as a result, it should be largely independent of the management of the organisation to ensure transparency and accountability. Although the new Chairperson brings valuable project management experience to B2B Doc, concerns were also raised about the fact that he is the son of one of the founding members. And while some capacity development support has been provided by Sida to the project administrator, no thorough capacity assessment has been undertaken as yet.

Impact

While it is extremely difficult to attribute high-level impact to any one programme or project, the B2B Doc project has the potential to create impact at the higher level and no negative results or impact were reported at that level. It has already had some impact on freedom of expression for filmmakers and various controversial human rights and democracy issues have been highlighted both in partner countries and internationally.

More directly, and based on extensive consultations with filmmakers, it is clear that the project has made a very real difference to all beneficiaries/filmmakers.

Gender equality

Of some concern to Sida is the fact that B2B Doc reports suggest that gender equality has been addressed ‘organically’ rather than there being a specific focus on gender: there are reportedly more women than men working in the documentary filmmaking business; many of the films have strong female protagonists while others have a specific focus on ‘women’s issues’; and at least two projects focus on the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning), and intersex (LGBTQI) persons. Less well reported are the fact that a workshop has also been held on the topic with a second one planned; filmmakers are encouraged to identify and highlight ‘gender aspects’ in their films during workshops; and some aspects of gender have been mainstreamed into B2B Doc workshops and activities. When it comes to whether or not the project had any positive or negative effects on gender equality, it is difficult to measure whether anything has changed or whether any changes could be attributed to B2B Doc. However, there is the potential for impact given that many of the films have a focus on gender (including LGBTQI persons) that might not be possible without B2B Doc support.

Conflict sensitivity

This issue appears to have been added to the terms of reference for the evaluation based on a potential for conflict between filmmakers if Azerbaijan were to be added to the project in a future phase. There have been no conflicts between filmmakers under the current project even though B2B Doc provides support to both Russian and Ukrainian filmmakers during a time of conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Sustainability

Given that it focuses on building capacity of filmmakers and creating networks between them and decision-makers, festivals and others, the project has achieved a high level of sustainability of benefits. However, it is heavily dependent on Sida funding, has not developed or implemented a resource mobilisation strategy, and its level of sustainability as a project is thus at risk if Sida funding were to be reduced or stopped.

Recommendations

Based on the evaluation, lessons learned, and suggestions for improvement in the current and any future phase, the following recommendations are included in the report:

a. Current phase:

Recommendations for B2B Doc

- As an overall recommendation, there is a clear need for B2B Doc to respond to the current COVID-19 pandemic to ensure its activities and support remain relevant and effective. B2B Doc is already moving more of its capacity building support online and making use of available technology, but it will need to consult widely and plan carefully when it comes to how to build and maintain the network should travel remain constrained.
- There is an urgent need for an effective monitoring and evaluation system to be developed within the available budget. B2B Doc should also give consideration to appointing an existing staff member or employing a new staff member (full- or part-time) to specifically focus on monitoring and evaluation.
- Although additional financial and narrative reporting capacity has been gained, there is nonetheless a need to ensure that both narrative and financial reporting by B2B Doc is improved. Narrative reports should focus on reporting against the results framework and indicators and should highlight any impact the project is having in the lives of filmmakers, progress with films, and grants and accolades received by partners. And financial reports should show budget, actual income, and expenditure to create a clearer picture of whether or not the project is absorbing funds provided to it.
- To reduce its reliance on Sida and increase sustainability, B2B Doc should develop a resource mobilisation strategy identifying all possible sources of funding and should consider making one senior staff member responsible for ensuring the strategy is implemented. A standard proposal should be prepared that can be speedily amended as appropriate to enable B2B Doc to respond quickly to any funding opportunities that may arise.
- B2B Doc should immediately revise all job descriptions for staff, including members of the Board that will be playing a role in project implementation, to ensure that the roles and functions of each staff/board member when it comes to decision-making and oversight are clearly spelled out.
- Within the available budget, B2B Doc should contract a thorough capacity needs assessment to determine where gaps currently exist and where they might be expected to increase should new countries be added or the number of film projects increased. Based on this assessment and a scoping of what capacity development support can be provided by both Sida and others, B2B Doc should develop and adopt a staff development strategy that is not exclusively dependent on Sida support.
- Within the available budget, B2B Doc should consider contracting in a gender-equality specialist to conduct a thorough ‘gender lens’ assessment of all training programmes and materials and communication materials to determine how gender-

equality might be better mainstreamed and what other specific training might be required.

- To increase the outreach of the films they support, and to ensure the messages therein are communicated to as wide an audience as possible, B2B Doc should provide links on its website, Facebook page and other communication materials enabling users to find where the films can be streamed and/or downloaded.
- To prevent any allegations of unfairness in the staff appointment process, B2B Doc should develop a clear, open and transparent staff recruitment policy, strategy and procedure as soon as possible.
- Within the current and future restrictions related to travel, B2B Doc should reach out to all Swedish Embassies in its current partner countries to raise awareness of the project, consider hosting screenings of films, and to determine whether there are any additional linkages or sources of funding that could be maximised.
- The policy of requiring those funded by B2B Doc to travel to festivals etc. to share a room with others should be reconsidered. At minimum, those whose travel and accommodation is being funded should first be given the option of sharing rooms rather than being required to do so.

Recommendation for Sida

- It can already be anticipated that the project will underspend its current budget, particularly as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are felt and activities are cancelled or curtailed. Taking into account the recommendations for B2B Doc above, Sida should immediately enter into discussion with B2B Doc to agree how best available funds can be used, including for new activities not specifically included in the project proposal, to avoid these funds being forfeited at the end of the project period.

b. Future phase

Recommendations for B2B Doc

- In consultation with Sida, B2B Doc should give consideration to a holistic programme of activities and budget that covers the entirety of its work post 2020, rather than separate projects for each development partner, and that development partners can contribute to according to their choice of activities and/or partner countries. All development partners contributing to the programme should also be encouraged to agree to one consolidated financial and narrative report, in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.
- B2B Doc should prioritise the finalisation of its theory of change, complemented with a fully developed intervention logic that includes activities and outputs, for adoption by the Board.
- Based on lessons learned during the remainder of the current project, the designers of the next project proposal to Sida should be mindful to include a specific focus on how the fallout from the current COVID-19 pandemic, and any future viral outbreaks, will be addressed. The project proposal should at a minimum include alternative proposals for all types of activities requiring travel (both international

and within countries), face-to-face interactions and possible restrictions on large groups.

- As the project develops, B2B Doc should establish an independent Board, separate from project management, to provide effective oversight and decision-making over how the project is being implemented and whether it is achieving its intended results. When establishing the new Board, consideration should be given to both ensuring that the Board is gender-balanced and to including a representative of a female filmmakers' network on the Board.
- To ensure that any future conflicts are properly managed, B2B Doc should develop a conflict resolution and mitigation strategy for adoption by the Board as soon as possible during, or even before, any possible future phase.

Recommendation for Sida

- Based the results of the current evaluation, and depending on revisions to its strategy and availability of funds, Sida should continue to provide funding to B2B Doc. Given that documentary films often take many years to complete, consideration should be given to increasing the project period to three to four years (with the fourth year being used as a phase out period). This will also allow B2B Doc to formulate an exit strategy for Sida-funding whilst simultaneously planning to secure funding from other sources.

1 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

NIRAS has been contracted by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to conduct an evaluation of the Baltic to Black Sea Documentary Network (B2B Doc) 2017-2020. Although the network includes six countries at present - Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Russia – Sida support does not include support to Russian filmmakers and they, and the work of B2B Doc related to them, are not included in the evaluation.

The **evaluation team** selected for the assignment was:

- Greg Moran, Team Leader.
- Yaroslava Naumova, Media Expert.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

According to the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the assignment¹, the **purpose** or intended use of the evaluation was twofold:

- To serve as an input for Sida on which decisions can be based in the processes of assessing if a new phase of the project is deemed relevant and cost-efficient and should receive funding from Sida.
- To help Sida and B2B Doc project team/Oberoende Filmars Förbund (OFF) to assess progress of the on-going project to learn from what works well and less well. The evaluation will be used to inform decisions on how project implementation may be adjusted and improved in a potential future phase.

The evaluation was also required to include recommendations for what a further phase of support might entail and how any issues identified during the current phase might best be addressed in future.

The evaluation is based on the latest version of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee's (OECD/DAC) evaluation criteria² with the addition of two specific areas of concern for Sida and included in the ToR – gender equality and conflict sensitivity. Although not mentioned in the ToR or inception report, OECD/DAC has introduced a new criterion (coherence) to the original list of five (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and

¹ The ToR are attached as Annex 1.

² Better Criteria for Better Evaluation, OECD/DAC, November 2019.

sustainability). Since Sida and the evaluators had concerns about whether or not the project overlaps with what others are doing or supporting in the region, specific questions on coherence were included in the interviews and roundtables conducted and the report includes a heading on coherence under Chapter 3 below.

1.3 EVALUATION PERIOD

As agreed with Sida during the inception phase, the evaluation is mindful of, but does not specifically include, the Sida funded inception period (June 2015 to December 2016). And as further agreed, except when required by the context, the evaluation period is from the start of the current project (1 July 2018) to 16 December 2019³.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation began with two **start-up meetings** (via videoconference) on 10 February 2020: the first with Sida and B2B Doc staff, and the second with the current Sida Programme Officer and Controller for the project. The **inception phase** included a detailed **document review**⁴, culminating in the submission of a **draft inception report** on 2 March 2020. Following comments from Sida and B2B Doc, the draft inception report was revised, and the **final inception report** submitted on 6 March 2020.

The original methodology for the assignment detailed in the inception report included one or two interviews to be conducted via videoconference with those who would not be available during the data collection phase, followed by on-site visits to Kyiv, Ukraine (to coincide with B2B Doc events linked to the Docudays Human Rights Film Festival scheduled to take place in March 2020) and to Stockholm, where both the project and Sida headquarters are based. Unfortunately, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak worsened significantly in the weeks leading up to the start of the on-site missions. It was thus agreed with Sida to cancel the planned travel for the team leader, which was followed shortly thereafter by the cancellation of the Docudays Festival itself. The methodology was then adapted by the team, in consultation with Sida and B2B Doc, to allow the team to conduct all interviews and roundtable discussions via videoconferencing, save for two face-to-face interviews conducted by

³ The date of 16 December 2019 was agreed with Sida (after submission of the inception report) as the end date for the evaluation based on the fact that (a) it was already apparent that B2B Doc's monitoring and evaluation system was weak and a lot of data would need to be found by the project team in a short space of time; and (b) that B2B Doc staff had updated the data they did have available to 16 December as part of the process of developing the application for an extension of the project period.

⁴ A list of documents consulted is attached as Annex 2.

the Media Expert with Kyiv-based stakeholders shortly before the pandemic took hold and isolation measures were introduced.

Despite these difficulties, the team were able to consult 52 respondents during one-on-one interviews and two roundtables⁵:

- Four interviews with Sida staff.
- Nine interviews with B2B Doc staff (including tutors).
- Seven one-on-one interviews with filmmakers (completed projects).
- Two roundtable discussions with a total of 11 filmmakers working on new/current projects.
- 17 interviews with B2B Doc ‘partners’ (such as organisers of film festivals and similar networks) and ‘decision-makers’ (producers).
- Four interviews with other stakeholders (other donors and auditors).

In line with the ToR, and as amplified in the proposal for the evaluation submitted by NIRAS, the team leader intended to conduct a full theory of change workshop that could not take place because of travel limitations. The limitations of videoconferencing meant that workshop had to be converted into a roundtable discussion, conducted by team leader with the senior staff of B2B Doc on 26 March 2020. The results of this discussion are described in Chapter 4.

1.5 LIMITATIONS

As already mentioned in Section 1.4, the biggest challenges facing the evaluation were those occasioned by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the adapted methodology allowed the evaluation to proceed largely as planned, the pandemic nonetheless denied the team an invaluable opportunity to attend events in Kyiv to both see B2B Doc ‘in action’ and to speak both formally and informally to members of the B2B Doc project team, filmmakers and decision-makers.

Other challenges faced were:

- The limited budget available meant the team could only plan to visit one partner country. Although the mission was in any event cancelled, the team included videoconference interviews with filmmakers and partners in partner countries and countries other than Ukraine and Sweden to ensure that all countries were covered. All of these interviews were conducted.
- The team leader was hospitalised for a period of 10 days during February, which delayed the submission of the draft inception report. Nonetheless, the team was able to plan without delaying the deadline for submission of the draft report.
- Very little data was provided to the team during the inception phase, other than two narrative and financial reports to Sida. Given that the reports themselves are weak

⁵ A list of those consulted is attached as Annex 3.

(as dealt with in various parts of this report), the team noted in the inception report that they would prepare a list of questions for B2B Doc to ensure that all relevant data was provided to the team. This list was sent to B2B Doc on 3 March 2020, with a request that the information be provided to the evaluators by 27 March 2020. The exercise had two objectives – firstly to ensure the team had the required information, but also to determine how effective B2B Doc’s monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system is. Although some data were not kept by B2B Doc, and thus were not available, the majority of the data requested were provided and were adequate to allow for analysis to be undertaken. The results of this exercise and the data provided inform the entire report.

Although these challenges no doubt impacted on the evaluation, the evaluation team was able to consult everyone originally included in the list of people to be consulted, and the evaluators are satisfied that there was sufficient consultation and written data and information on which to base their conclusions and recommendations in this report.

2 The Baltic to Black Sea Documentary Network

2.1 BACKGROUND

The Baltic to Black Sea Documentary Network (B2B Doc) started as a private initiative by Dixit International in 2014 with seed funding provided by the Svenska Institutet⁶ (Swedish Institute's) 'Creative Force Programme'⁶. It was inaugurated in March 2014 at the Docudays Human Rights Film Festival in Kyiv. The brainchild of two highly experienced filmmakers with extensive experience in the region, the project was conceived to increase cooperation in and co-production of documentary films between Nordic/Baltic and Eastern European filmmakers in five post-Soviet countries: Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine⁷. The documentary filmmaking industry in targeted countries is still in relatively nascent form, levels of freedom of expression are lower than elsewhere, and opportunities to secure funding for independent documentary films from government and other sources are limited. The project thus sought to provide a platform for filmmakers to collaborate and co-produce films while acting as a bridge between the traditional film making structures in the post-Soviet countries and the contemporary media structures in the EU market and other countries in the West.

Since 2015, B2B Doc has been hosted by Oberoende Filmares Förbund (OFF), based at Filmhuset in Stockholm. Founded in 1984, OFF is an association of producers and film directors with a Board consisting of active filmmakers and artists. In addition to the initial seed-funding from the Swedish Institute, the Institute also provided funding in 2014 to determine how to add Georgia to the then list of target countries, and is currently supporting the inclusion of Russian filmmakers in the B2B Doc Network under a new, 2019 grant. The Institute is also providing seed-funding (2019-20) for B2B Doc to explore whether and how to include Azerbaijan in a possible future phase. Together, all four grants provided by the Swedish Institute from 2014 to 2020 amount to 975,000 SEK. In addition, OFF received EUR 90,000 from the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2016 to engage filmmakers from the Nordic and Baltic countries in the B2B Doc network.

⁶ The Swedish Institute is a public agency that promotes interest and trust in Sweden around the world. It works in the fields of culture, education, science and business to strengthen international relations and development. (<https://si.se/en/>).

⁷ Although B2B Doc also supports Russian filmmakers, this is under a separate agreement between Dixit International and the Swedish Institute and is not supported with Sida funding.

2.2 THE SIDA-SUPPORTED PROJECT

Sida is by far the largest development partner supporting B2B Doc. Based on a lengthy Sida-funded inception period (July 2015 – December 2016), Sida is currently supporting B2B Doc in the amount of 17.1m SEK under a project grant with OFF for the original period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2020. In April 2020, Sida agreed to extend the current contract to 31 December 2020 with an additional amount of approximately 3m SEK. Sida support does not include Russia, but only the five countries included in the Strategy for Sweden's Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014-2020: Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

According to the latest version of the results framework for the Sida-supported project (December 2019), the **overall objective** of the project is: Enhanced interactivity and capacity of the region's documentary film industry, thus increasing the sustainability of business initiatives and improving conditions for democracy and human rights in the post-Soviet region⁸. The project has three **outcomes** (referred to as 'main purposes' in the project proposal), each with its own **objective**. According to the latest results framework⁹, the purposes and their objectives are:

4. Partnerships: Established relations and partnerships between filmmakers, production companies, film schools, media industry, public institutions and distributors through networking and physical meetings.
5. Understanding and learning the business: Increased knowledge among the cooperation partners on how business and co-production is conducted in a rapidly changing European media market.
6. Democracy and freedom of speech: Enhanced appreciation of the values of democracy, freedom of speech and gender equality in the documentary film business among co-operation partners.

As detailed in Annex 4 and elaborated on in Chapter 3 of this report, the results framework details activities for each outcome.

In addition to managing the contract with the Swedish Institute, Dixit International continues to play a key role and was subcontracted by OFF to provide members of the B2B Doc project management team (Malcolm Dixelius and Alex Shiriaieff¹⁰) who

⁸ The current objective is slightly different, but essentially the same as that provided in the B2B Project Proposal 2017-2020, page 7, which states it as: 'to contribute to enhanced interactivity and capacity of the regions documentary film industry, thus increasing the sustainability of business initiatives and improving the basis for democracy in the post-Soviet regions'.

⁹ As described in Section 3.3 below (Effectiveness), the purposes / outcomes listed in the 2019 results framework differ in some cases from those in the project proposal.

¹⁰ Job titles of the B2B Doc project team are not always clear and sometimes differ between the agreements with Sida and Swedish Institute as well as in the contracts between Dixit International and relevant individuals. To avoid confusion, the evaluators have used the names of relevant members of

make up the project administration together with the Chairman of the OFF Board (Johan Seth, on contract with OFF for the B2B Doc project). OFF has also appointed additional staff to assist in the B2B Doc administration (Anya Belyaeva) and has contracted key consultants for the B2B Doc project (Paul Dixelius and two directors/tutors: Anastasia Kirilova and Viktor Nordenskiöld). In mid-2019, B2B Doc transitioned into an independent non-governmental organisation (NGO), and on 5 February 2020, B2B Doc appointed a new Board of Governors¹¹ that replicates the project leadership group of the project. Although any future agreement with Sida will be between the B2B Doc NGO and Sida, the Sida project remains intrinsically linked to OFF though since OFF is the signatory to the agreement and will remain responsible for Sida funds until the current grant comes to an end (31 December 2020). Complicating things, Dixit International is responsible for funds from the Swedish Institute and, since the Institute can only provide funds to an NGO that has been in existence for two years, will remain so for current funding as well as any additional funding from the Institute for at least another 18 months.

the team where appropriate.

¹¹ The Board consists of Paul Dixelius, consultant, chairman; Johan Seth, OFF, project responsible, Sida; Malcolm Dixelius, Dixit International AB, project responsible Swedish Institute; Anastasia Kirillova, tutor; and Viktor Nordenskiöld, tutor. The project administration consists of Alex Shiriaieff, project manager; and Anya Belyaeva, administrative manager. Both managers will report to the Board and take part in Board meetings.

3 Findings

3.1 RELEVANCE

The inception report included the following evaluation questions linked to relevance:

Evaluation questions	
1.	To what extent was the (unwritten) theory of change relevant at the start of the project given the political economy, levels of freedom of expression and democracy in the region generally and partner countries in particular?
2.	What changes have occurred in countries and the region since the start of the project and to what extent has the project responded to changing needs?
3.	What changes have occurred in access to public service television, private television stations, the number of people accessing the internet, opportunities for documentaries to be aired other than on television, and to what extent has the project responded to any such changes?

The OECD/DAC defines relevance as the extent to which a project's objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change¹². In this section, we look at the level of alignment of the project with the relevant Swedish strategy, whether the project was in line with the needs of the filmmakers in the targeted countries given the reality in which they find themselves, and the degree to which it has been able to respond to any changes that have occurred in partner countries.

3.1.1 Relevance at design

The project's overall objective is closely aligned with the Strategy for Sweden's Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe 2014-2020, which includes 'Strengthened democracy, greater respect for human rights and a more fully developed state under the rule of law and the freer and more independent media' (Result 2). Although there is no written theory of change, the project document shows that the project is based on extensive experience of the needs of filmmakers in post-Soviet countries, acquired by the project's founders over many years, as well as extensive consultation and analysis during the inception phase. The design of the project is mindful of the levels of democracy and human rights in partner countries, including the right to freedom of expression, and seeks to assist filmmakers to exercise both their right to receive and to impart information in situations where funds are generally not available to independent filmmakers and/or where their right to freedom of expression is constrained by government and societal attitudes. As a result, save for two whose experience with B2B Doc was limited, all of the filmmakers and partners consulted agreed that the project

¹² *Op. cit.* page 7.

was highly relevant to the country contexts and the needs of filmmakers in partner countries at the design stage.

3.1.2 Relevance over time

Although it is not possible to conduct a thorough analysis of changes in the political economy of all partner countries in an evaluation of this nature, respondents were asked whether there were any major changes to which the project needed to respond in the period under review. No major changes were reported in partner countries, other than that it had become harder in most to secure state funding for documentary films. However, it was reported by many of those consulted that the entire market is changing as funding becomes even more constrained and as large international streaming services enter it and as more online distribution channels become available. By supporting filmmakers to understand and adapt to the changing market, the project is responding to changing needs.

There also appears to have been very little change when it comes to the numbers of television stations (public and private) in partner countries other than the establishment of Current Time TV - a Russian language 24/7 television channel, linked to Radio Free Europe, and based in Prague. B2B Doc has formed linkages with Current Time TV that have ensured that films are broadcast on the channel. On the other hand, it was widely reported that public broadcasting, generally, has become more nationalistic - not just in post-Soviet countries - and there is less funding than ever for independent documentary films. B2B Doc continues to respond to this need by creating networks and capacitating filmmakers to find funds and co-producers in Europe to address the threat.

The project has also had to adapt though to two significant ‘internal’ changes that occurred since it was conceived. Firstly, the original design included the development of and support to formal working groups that would act more or less as sub-groups in partner countries. According to B2B Doc and filmmakers consulted during the evaluation, filmmakers were not used to working in organised groups, were afraid that others in the group would steal their ideas or compete for the same funds, working groups were viewed as being too country specific, the approach was seen too ‘Swedish’, and filmmakers generally preferred a less formal network both within and across the partner countries. Secondly, the original design included a grant-making facility for filmmakers in partner countries that was not possible within the agreement with Sida. Although not consciously following the problem-driven iterative adaptation approach, the project team has adapted very well to both of these issues: the network has grown considerably and activities have been implemented smoothly even without formal working groups, and funds have been made available to filmmakers to travel to festivals and other events where no other funding would have been available to them. To that extent, the project team has managed to ensure that the project has remained relevant over time.

Although it falls outside of the period of the current evaluation, B2B Doc has already begun to respond to perhaps its biggest challenge: the COVID-19 pandemic. To remain relevant, some activities originally scheduled to be conducted during the Docudays Film Festival in Kyiv will be conducted by webinar and consideration is being given to how else the project can adapt to the travel and other restrictions imposed in response to the virus. Further, unforeseen complications can also be expected. For example, funding for the Ukrainian State Film Agency was reduced by 40% during the budget revision in mid-April 2020 and similar cuts can be expected elsewhere that will make it even more difficult than it already is for filmmakers to secure funding for their films.

3.2 COHERENCE

As noted in the introductory chapter, OECD/DAC have recently added a new criterion to their list of standard evaluation criteria – coherence – that was not included in the ToR or in the evaluation matrix in the inception report. Coherence is closely linked to relevance and is defined as ‘the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution’¹³. Put simply, the question in our case is whether or not the project overlaps with support being provided to filmmakers in the partner countries by other projects, including those being supported directly by Swedish Embassies in those countries.

3.2.1 Coherence with support provided by others

Although some of the B2B Doc partners (film festivals, producers, etc.) provide support to filmmakers such as funding, training and during festivals, no overlaps were reported. Instead, it was noted that the B2B Doc project targets different countries to those supported by others and is the only project that targets all five of the countries as a ‘group’. B2B Doc also focuses on building a range of skills amongst filmmakers – from the very start of the process until rough cut stage – whereas other projects focus only on some of the necessary skills or on a part of the filmmaking process. Most importantly, the project builds skills and capacity that allows filmmakers to participate in the activities of partners based in countries with more developed documentary filmmakers¹⁴. As a result, filmmakers from countries that are not usually considered for such events are able to attend because of the skills and understanding they have acquired from B2B Doc and the project complements rather than overlapping with the support provided by others.

¹³ *Op. Cit.* page 8.

¹⁴ For example, European Documentary Network (soon to be the Documentary Association of Europe) notes that they are able to invite at least one participant to their two international workshops each year (they receive over 100 applications and only choose the best) only because their capacity has been built by B2B Doc. Similar comments were received from the Institute of Documentary Film, Czech Republic – that the quality of the projects attending their workshops and supported by B2B Doc is very high, which makes it easier for the Institute to pick up and support the projects that are much more ready for an international market.

There are no similar Sida-supported projects or programmes focused on the Eastern European region. When it comes to Sida support being provided by Embassies, although it was not possible to contact each Embassy in the time available, it appears that the only funds being provided to anything related to B2B Doc is funding from the Embassy in Kyiv to the Docudays Festival. Given that the Docudays Festival is a close partner for B2B Doc (see Section 3.3 below), such support is highly complementary to that provided by Sida headquarters. B2B Doc has contacted Embassies in Georgia/Armenia and Belarus to raise awareness of the project and to see what other funds might be available but no funds have as yet been secured. In the case of Belarus, B2B Doc has also requested the Embassy to consider funding another of its partners – the Northern Lights Nordic and Baltic Film Festival Belarus. However, the Embassy reportedly did not have funds available to do so.

3.3 EFFECTIVENESS

OECD/DAC define effectiveness as ‘the extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups’¹⁵. With that in mind, the following evaluation questions were included in the inception report¹⁶:

Evaluation questions
1. To what extent have planned activities in the project proposal been implemented – where any have been missed, what are the reasons for this and what can be done to address challenges?
2. Have project activities contributed to intended outcomes? If not, why not? What are the major factors, internally and externally, influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
3. Has the M&E system delivered robust and useful information that could be used to assess progress towards outcomes and contribute to learning?

3.3.1 Introduction

As illustrated in Annex 4 - Results (Project Proposal and New Results Framework), the B2B Doc project proposal includes a results framework with three outcomes or purposes. Each purpose contains a number of activities (referred to as ‘methods’) and includes an ‘objective’ and a mix of activity and output indicators linked to these. In all but a very few cases, there are no indicators at the outcome/purpose level. Activity and output indicators are quantified (for example, ‘at least 12 co-produced projects’) where the quantities should rather be seen as targets, and the text of the project document also includes some activity and output indicators that are not listed in the annexed version of the results framework.

¹⁵ *Op. Cit.* page 9.

¹⁶ The ToR included an additional question: *To what extent have lessons learned from what works well and less well been used to improve and adjust project implementation?* This question replicates questions falling under ‘relevance’ and is also dealt with more fully in Chapter 4.

The B2B Doc results framework has been revised and a new version included in the application for a contract extension. This is a marked improvement on the previous version and includes revised ‘goals’ for each purpose as well as ‘sub-goals’ that could also be read, in many cases, as outcome indicators. The results framework also contains better, unquantified activity and output indicators (although it does not separate these out or provide any targets). In the text that follows, based largely on available reports supplemented by data provided to the team as part of the evaluation process, we try to create an accurate picture of what activities and outputs have been conducted and produced during the period of evaluation by comparing these to the available indicators before considering whether or not these activities and outputs have contributed to the intended results.

3.3.2 Partnerships

The current goal for ‘partnerships’ is stated in the revised results framework as: ‘Established relations and partnerships between filmmakers, production companies, media industry, film schools, public institutions and distributors through networking and physical meetings¹⁷’. This is essentially the same as that stated in the original project proposal with the substitution of ‘film schools’ for young filmmakers and the inclusion of the phrase ‘through networking and physical meetings’ in place of ‘in the region’.

Most of the activities listed in the results frameworks have been conducted:

- Awareness raising activities have been conducted by B2B Doc staff (primarily Alex Shiriaieff) at 50 film festivals in partner and other countries¹⁸.
- B2B Doc has organised and conducted 35 events in the period under evaluation: 12 workshops on story development, trailer production and rough cut; five pitch trainings; five Producer meet Producer events; one ‘storytelling with a personal voice’ workshop for female filmmakers; seven open masterclasses and lectures; two public screenings with questions and answers; and three B2B Doc presentations.
- A total of 211 filmmakers (excluding Russian filmmakers) have participated in B2B Doc activities in festivals in target countries (88 men and 123 women), although some filmmakers have attended more than one event. Filmmakers from Ukraine top the list (101) followed by Belarus (46), which in turn reflects the number of active filmmakers in partner countries.
- B2B Doc has participated in 13 festivals in countries other than partner countries and is currently in negotiation with a further five. All in all, B2B Doc has participated in a total of 40 events at festivals outside of the partner countries – 18 in year 1, 14 in year 2, and eight in the period 1 July to 16 December 2019.
- A total of 66 travel grants have been made to filmmakers to attend events and festivals in countries other than their own. Once again reflecting the number of

¹⁷ The original formulation was: Establishing relations and partnerships between filmmakers, production companies, young filmmakers, media industry, public institutions and distributors in the region.

¹⁸ 20 in year 1; 21 in year 2; and nine in the period 1 July to 16 December 2019.

active, independent filmmakers in partner countries, most grants have been awarded to filmmakers from Ukraine (30) and Belarus (23). These grants were highly appreciated by filmmakers, especially since even in those countries where some funding is available from national film institutes, it does not include travel costs for filmmakers to pitch or show their films at festivals.

- The network of filmmakers and decision-makers has grown considerably and, by December 2019, had 126 active participants who have taken part in B2B Doc activities. To facilitate the network and enhance communication, B2B Doc has established a website, a Facebook page and a database on the Eventival platform¹⁹.
- As a result of the website as well as linkages created by B2B Doc and attendance at festivals and events where they have been able to pitch their ideas to decision-makers, 18 projects have been able to find co-producers for their films.
- A study visit to Sweden was conducted in March 2019 linked to the Producer meet Producer event at the Tempo Documentary Film Festival in Stockholm. B2B Doc also helped to arrange a panel discussion - 'Filmmakers at Risk' - during the festival attended by six filmmakers (five from project countries and one from Russia). A proposed study tour to Finland in 2019 was cancelled since it was part of a festival held simultaneously in Finland and Estonia and it was more cost-effective for B2B Doc filmmakers to attend the Estonian event.

Although targets are not included in the revised results framework, B2B Doc has met or exceeded all 'targets' in the original project proposal. The only activities not conducted are those related to the establishment of formal working groups within partner countries, where there was no interest for such groups from the filmmakers, and those related to workshops for local networks, guilds and producers. The latter activities were dropped from the project because it was realised that B2B Doc should first build its reputation as a trusted partner before local networks, unions and guilds would feel comfortable working with them. In addition, it was decided that invitations should come from the networks, guilds, television stations and film institutes rather than having B2B Doc suggest these to them; and the networks etc. And, at least in some cases, some of the potential targets for such interventions (such as the film institutes and guilds in some countries) are still perceived as corrupt, unrepresentative or too closely linked to government.

3.3.3 Understanding and learning the business

The goal for this purpose or outcome is stated in the revised results framework as: 'Increased knowledge among the cooperation partners on how business and co-production is conducted in a rapidly changing European media market', which is essentially the same as that in the project proposal. Activities aim to enhance professional standards in the production of international documentary films among B2B Doc co-operation partners and to establish cross-border co-production as a means

¹⁹ Although the website was established in 2018, the counter on the website was not properly installed and so it is not possible to determine the number of visitors since then. The Facebook page currently has 1 385 users and around 700 reactions monthly.

of increasing quality and financing within documentary filmmaking in the programme countries.

B2B Doc has performed well in this area:

- 10 Seminars on professional standards have been held, including three webinars. Unfortunately, it is not possible as yet to say how many participants these have attracted – they are ‘open’ events and records of participants have as yet not been kept.
- 26 Workshops on professional standards for B2B Doc filmmakers have been conducted (including one in Sweden). A total of 274 participants attended these: 109 men and 165 women.
- The flagship Producer meet Producer (PmP) event is held at the Docudays Festival in Ukraine, where a week of training and workshopping during the so-called ‘industry days’ culminates in an opportunity for filmmakers to pitch their proposals to producers, heads of television stations and other decision-makers invited to the event by B2B Doc. Three such events have been held in the period under evaluation where 67 B2B Doc filmmakers have met with 57 decision-makers from a range of countries outside of those targeted by the project. Smaller PmP events have also been held at the Tempo Documentary Film Festival in Stockholm, at the industry days of Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival (Estonia) and at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (one event in each of those listed). The outcome of these PmP events is very impressive: although B2B Doc has not been very successful in finding co-producers from Nordic countries listed in the project proposal, 17 co-productions have resulted from PmP events between B2B Doc filmmakers and producers from Estonia, Germany, Japan, Lithuania, Belgium, Romania, Serbia, France, Latvia, Poland and Russia.

3.3.4 Democracy and freedom of speech

The objective for this outcome in the original project proposal was simply ‘spreading values of democracy and freedom of speech’. This is amplified in the revised results framework, where the goal is stated as ‘enhanced appreciation of the values of democracy, freedom of speech and gender equality in the documentary film business among co-operation partners.’ Activities falling under this outcome in the original proposal included capacity building for partners on democratic values, introducing gender equality as a factor in the selection of films, and ensuring working groups and the entire network applied democratic principles in the selection of board members, and ensuring films on various democracy and human rights topics were screened on TV stations. Based on lessons learned by B2B Doc over the preceding years, this approach is modified somewhat in the revised results framework. Activities are split into two ‘sub-goals’. The first focuses on assisting filmmakers to have their films distributed and ensuring funds are targeted at projects with a clear democratic vision and applying principles of democracy, gender equality and transparency in project implementation. The second aims at integrating B2B Doc and coordinating with other organisations – NGOs and non-profits – focused on similar objectives of enhanced democracy and human rights.

Although the overall objective for the project implies that it aims to contribute to better conditions for democracy and human rights in the post-Soviet region, the selection criteria for projects does not include a requirement that these focus on democracy, freedom of speech²⁰/expression, human rights or gender equality. Instead, although the Strategy for Sweden's Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe includes a focus on democracy, human rights and rule of law, B2B Doc is only required to contribute to these rather than having to be completely focused on them. Nonetheless, while the only real criterion for selection is that the films should have international appeal, the majority of films supported by B2B Doc (according to both B2B Doc, filmmakers and partners consulted) **are** focused on democracy and human rights issues and many also have a focus on gender (either directly or indirectly). It was also widely reported by filmmakers and partners in particular that B2B Doc supports films that would not otherwise be made because they deal with controversial and sensitive issues. Some films at times need to be made in secret and, without B2B Doc support, that would not be possible.

According to the data provided, B2B Doc has established relationships with 18 other organisations, although few of these are specifically focused on human rights and democracy. Amongst these, it has developed a relationship with the Human Rights Film Network (which coordinates international activities of film festivals with human rights issues as the main topic) and was invited to attend the Impact Day at the International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights that was scheduled to take place in Geneva in March 2020 (although the festival was cancelled as a result of COVID-19). It is also in the process of establishing a relationship with Good Pitch²¹, a British project supporting documentary filmmakers with a focus on human rights, and aims to bring Good Pitch to B2B Doc target countries in future. However, it has not yet developed any formal relationship with NGOs and organisations promoting democracy and human rights/freedom of expression such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace and Human Rights Watch although it has plans to do more in this regard in future. Such organisations could work with filmmakers to develop films on particular issues and could also be a source of additional funding for films that are already in the process of being developed.

3.3.5 Monitoring and evaluation

B2B Doc's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system is very *ad hoc* and largely inadequate. Although reports are compiled at the end of events and travel, and while there is verbal evaluation of capacity building interventions at the end, there is no systematic M&E framework, data are not sought or collected on funds raised by projects as a result of the B2B Doc support, and there is no formal pre- and post-course evaluation or follow up to see what partners have managed to do with training provided to them. No staff member is specifically responsible for M&E, with responsibility for

²⁰ The results framework uses the term 'freedom of speech' but B2B Doc staff are aware that it would be better to refer to 'freedom of expression', which includes both the right to impart and receive information. It thus includes both the right of filmmakers to express their thoughts and ideas in their films, but also the right of audiences to see the films and consider the views expressed in them.

²¹ Good Pitch is a programme of Doc Society (docsociety.org)

M&E and reporting falling between OFF for Sida funds and Dixit International for Swedish Institute funding. The effect of this is plain to see: reports do not align with indicators in the results framework. This makes it difficult for Sida to see whether the project is achieving what it set out to do and, more importantly, for B2B Doc to measure its progress and to plan or amend its strategy and/or activities if required. Much of the data used in the current report were sourced by requesting B2B Doc to compile it at the outset of the assignment and which, it is reported, was the first time much of the data had been requested or obtained.

Mindful of its shortcomings in this area, B2B Doc are planning to conduct a baseline study to provide key data for a subsequent project, if approved. Such a study might help to determine levels of funding currently available, numbers of television channels, levels of state funding available and so on. But because the filmmakers that B2B Doc works with change over time, it will not substitute for a proper and robust M&E system to track what filmmakers think of the training provided, the degree to which their understanding of human rights and democracy has increased, what progress they are making with their films, or how much funding they have been able to secure as a result of B2B Doc's support.

3.4 EFFICIENCY

Efficiency is a measure of the extent to which the project delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way²². With that in mind, the inception report included the following evaluation questions:

Evaluation questions
1. Can the costs of the project be justified by its results?
2. Has the project been implemented in the most efficient way? What causes delays, what has been done to address these, and what other alternatives are there?

3.4.1 Cost versus Results

Measuring whether the costs of a project can be justified by its results goes further than measuring efficiency and is usually determined by a value for money evaluation. Since the current evaluation is not a value for money evaluation, and as explained in the inception report, the evaluators have had to rely on the opinions of those consulted as well as a consideration of the financial reports. Based on the latest information available (dated 27 August 2019), the following picture emerges:

²² OECD/DAC, *Op. Cit.* page 10.

Table 1 – Budget versus Expenditure 2017-19 (SEK)

Line item	Budget Year 1	Expend Year 1	Budget Year 2	Expend Year 2	Comments
Start-up seminar	256 100	322 491	Nil	Nil	This was a one off activity in year 1 and there was an over-expenditure of around 26%.
Project selection and production support (grants to filmmakers)	1 004 000	100 000	Nil	Nil	These activities were not possible within Sida rules and the majority of the budget has been re-allocated across the project.
B2B Doc travel support and festival attendance	132 000	92 357	280 000	278 000	There was some under-expenditure in year 1 but the amount expended in year 2 is virtually the same as that budgeted.
Producer meets Producer and pitch training	252 000	239 075	742 000	689 881	The project underspent slightly in both year 1 and year 2.
Storytelling with a personal voice	800 000	170 000			The project underspent considerably in year 1. There were no activities budgeted for in year 2 and the balance has been reallocated across the project.
Workshops, events and marketing	918 000	1 352 777	2 084 000	2 146 467	Although expenditure against the budget improved in year 2, the project overspent considerably in year 1 – reportedly as a result of under-budgeting. Over expenditure in year 2 was as a result of more workshops conducted than planned.
Travel, networking, festival attendance, project management (Alex Shiriaieff)	334 000	272 737	346 000	281 145	Reasons cited for the underspend in both years include that, in some cases, the costs of participation were borne by the relevant festivals.
Travel, networking, festival attendance, project management (other)	180 000	54 070	174 500	142 324	The main reason for the underspend in year 1 was attributed to the fact that, in the absence of a full-time project manager, Malcom Dixelius was fulfilling the role without being paid by the project to do so.

Line item	Budget Year 1	Expend Year 1	Budget Year 2	Expend Year 2	Comments
Marketing	85 000	Nil	84 000	74 771	None of the budget was spent in year 1 since there was reportedly no need for additional marketing to the awareness raising being conducted at festivals etc.
Project steering and monitoring	599 000	326 807	604 500	498 240	The underspend in year 1 was partly because the cost to develop steering documents by KPMG was less than anticipated and partly because there was less participation of OFF staff than expected. Although expenditure increased during year 2, it remained less than the budgeted amount.
Project management and quality control	3 021 000	2 843 351	3 269 755	3 099 561	B2B Doc underspent slightly in both years.
Total	5 405 600	4 779 701	6 251 783	5 884 767	

As illustrated by the table and as amplified by those consulted:

- Project management and quality control, and costs for workshops, events and marketing are the largest proportion of the budget. Although the amount expended for project management and control appears considerable compared to the overall budget, it includes staff salaries, an administrative fee for Dixit International, office space, telephone and internet, and audit fees. However, the salary for the project manager (Alex Shiriaieff) covers both his contribution to project management as well as when he is conducting networking, training and the like. His salary is thus at least partly a ‘project cost’ rather than an administrative one since networking and capacity building are key project activities.
- A significant proportion of funds is used for travel and accommodation, venue hire etc. for participants at B2B Doc events and to attend festivals and pitching sessions. B2B Doc has initiated web-based seminars – webinars – but not many as yet. While these may become increasingly important in the future and would be a good way of decreasing costs, they are not as effective as face-to-face training and one-on-one mentoring. Similarly, it may be possible to network without actually travelling to events and festivals, but that would be incomparably less effective than attending these in person.
- All travel paid for by the project is by economy class and accommodation is at reasonably priced hotels. In fact, B2B Doc probably go a bit too far in this regard, requiring those whose travel and accommodation the project pays to share a room with someone else funded by the project. While this was acceptable to some of the producers and directors consulted when they were working on the same film and are well known to each other, some filmmakers reported having to share a room

with a stranger. Although it is important to maximise funds, this is an issue that should be reconsidered from the perspective of the right to dignity and privacy.

Of initial concern to the team is the level of under expenditure during the first two years: approx. 0.6m SEK in year 1 and 0.4m SEK in year 2²³. According to B2B Doc, the reason for the under expenditure in year 1 was related to changes to the rules around VAT during year 1. This created a liquidity issue for B2B Doc that led to a decision not to use B2B Doc funds to cover the salaries of staff employed by Dixit International but rather to only use Sida funds for activities. Although there was still an underspend in year 2, this was considerably less than year 1 and it is reported that all underspent funds have already been absorbed during year 3.

However, as reported by current and previous Sida Programme Officers and the current Controller (who has been responsible for the project since it started), B2B Doc's financial reports for the first two years of the project (2017/18 and 2018/19) have been difficult to follow and have required significant revisions before they have been accepted. Part of the reason for this, at least according to B2B Doc staff, has been that there have been numerous Programme Officers over the course of the project, each with slightly different preferences for how they want the budget and financial reports to be presented. But it also appears that confusion is created by the fact that B2B Doc financial reports do not report against income but rather against the original budget submitted. So, for example, all financial reports reflect a budget of 5 405 600 SEK for year 1 and expenditure of 4 779 697 SEK, whereas B2B Doc report that the income from Sida was only 5m SEK and the level of underspending was thus considerably less. It was also reported that the budget provided to Sida is overly detailed, which leads at times to a perception that the project is overspending on particular line items. For example, it was noted that instead of having one line item for 'international travel', this is broken down by country. Because it has proved easier to work in Ukraine than in other countries, the travel budget for Ukraine has been overspent. But when the overall budget for travel to all five countries is considered, there is in fact an underspend.

Although financial reporting is expected to improve, it is not only Sida that has concerns. While noting that reports have improved recently, the Swedish Institute also reported that one of the reasons why B2B Doc applications for grants were rejected in 2015 and 2016, in addition to the poor quality of the applications, was that record-keeping and financial and narrative reporting was weak. And while the level of underspend may well be considerably lower than what appears from financial reports, the COVID-19 outbreak has the potential to significantly impact on rates of expenditure during the final period of the project as some activities are delayed or need to be conducted using different methodologies such as online learning. And while both B2B

²³ 4.8m SEK in year 1 against a budget of 5.4m SEK; and 5.9m SEK in year 2 against a budget of 6.3m SEK.

Doc and Sida are taking measures to mitigate against any delays between the current project and a new phase (such as completing the narrative report and audited financial report before the project comes to an end), a lag can also be anticipated between the end of the current funding from Sida and the start of any new grant.

3.4.2 Efficiency generally

Other than a gap between the end of the inception phase and the start of the current project while the contract was being prepared, there have been no delays in funding from Sida during the current project. According to all of those consulted, B2B Doc is generally regarded as efficient when it comes to organising events and capacity building, arranging travel and payment of consultants and no delays were reported in any of these areas. However, various issues related to efficiency arose during consultations that were not specifically covered in the evaluation matrix or that were not clear from available documents at the time of the inception report:

- Although the current evaluation focuses on the project from 1 July 2017, a concern was raised around the fact that, after the inception period and before the contract for the current phase was signed, B2B Doc incurred expenses on the understanding that these would be covered by the grant. This was primarily based on a lack of experience in working with Sida (or similar Development Partners) and the rules that no funds may be expended until the contract is signed, but it did cause difficulties for both Sida and B2B Doc with Dixit International having to carry the costs of the project out of its own funds.
- A further problem arose with the issue of value-added tax (VAT) that had a negative impact on the budget. Although B2B Doc was initially told that they would be able to recover VAT and were able to do so during their first year, the Tax Authority then decided that B2B Doc could not recover VAT. This impacted on the budget and meant that some activities, including a workshop in Armenia scheduled for July 2018, had to be delayed or cancelled.
- ‘Steering documents’ – policies and procedures²⁴ – were developed for the project with support from KPMG (under the budget provided by Sida), but these target OFF as the body housing the project and need to be revised for the B2B Doc NGO (which B2B Doc aimed to request KPMG to do with funds under the current project).
- It is not always clear to Sida (or the evaluators) who is responsible for what in B2B Doc, particularly when it comes to the two founding members and, more recently, when it comes to the new Chairperson (who is also expected to provide project management support). The originators of the project both provide guidance, experience, and a wealth of contacts. Malcolm Dixelius has also played the role of project manager (officially Alex Shiriaieff’s role) while the project manager has been attending festivals and events to raise awareness of the project, conducting

²⁴ The following documents were produced with assistance from KPMG: Anti-corruption / Fraud Policy; process descriptions for the administration; a delegation of authority from the Board to the management; a tool for assessing tenders; and project management guidelines.

training (together with the network of tutors), raising awareness, mentoring filmmakers and so on.

- In addition, the current Board is essentially the management and key staff of B2B Doc. Although it is not uncommon for small, new organisations to have a Board made up of the management of the organisation, it is not best practice. The role of a Board is essentially to oversee the work of an organisation and, as a result, it should be largely independent of the management of the organisation to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Concerns were raised by Sida that the new Chairperson of the B2B Doc Board is the son of one of the founders and that, although he has been acting as a consultant to B2B Doc over the course of the project and has inside knowledge of how it works, the appointment process was insufficiently transparent. Although he is currently providing limited assistance as a consultant to B2B Doc (primarily around the transition into an NGO, the final report for Sida and the new project proposal), there is no doubt that the new Chair will be a valuable addition to the team – he has project management experience and experience working with donor funds that others lack – and so his appointment was widely welcomed by those consulted.

B2B Doc is aware of their shortcomings when it comes to project and financial management and have applied a number of times to attend courses conducted by the Sida Partnership Forum. Although their applications were supported by Sida Programme Officers and Controllers, they were not selected until very recently when the administrative manager was selected to attend a course on results-based management. Although it appears that this was a result of the Forum not understanding what B2B Doc is or how it fits in with Sida, which has now been clarified, it is not always clear what B2B Doc's capacity needs are and no proper capacity assessment has been conducted. It should also be remembered that various other courses and training programmes are available and that B2B Doc should not become overly reliant on Sida to provide capacity building.

3.5 IMPACT

OECD/DAC define impact as 'the extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects'²⁵. The following evaluation questions related to impact were included in the ToR and inception report:

Evaluation questions	
1.	What is the overall impact of the project in terms of direct or indirect, negative and positive results?
2.	What real difference has the project made to the beneficiaries?

²⁵ *Op. Cit.* page 11.

Impact is really a measure of the social, environmental and economic effects of the intervention that are longer term or broader in scope than those already captured under the effectiveness criterion. While change at this level can usually be measured when considering a large programme that includes things like legislative and policy reform, it is considerably more difficult to measure the impact of a smaller project. And even where change is seen at the higher level, it is usually extremely difficult to attribute it to any one programme or project.

With that in mind, the project has the potential to create impact at the higher level and no negative results or impact were reported at that level. It has already had some impact on freedom of expression for filmmakers and various controversial human rights and democracy issues have been highlighted both in partner countries and internationally. More directly, and based on extensive consultations with filmmakers, it is clear that the project has made a very real difference to all beneficiaries/filmmakers. Skills have been built, invaluable experience has been gained by participation and attendance at festivals and other events, a significant number of co-producers have been found and additional finances secured²⁶, films have been produced and screened in cinemas, film festivals, on television and on other platforms. Although the number of completed films is relatively low (seven to end December 2019), those that have been or are still being supported have won numerous grants and awards, including the Directing Award: World Cinema Documentary at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival for the director of 'The Earth Is Blue as an Orange'²⁷.

3.6 GENDER EQUALITY

The ToR required a specific focus on gender equality. As a result, the inception report listed the following evaluation questions:

Evaluation questions
1. How has gender equality been integrated into the design, planning and implementation of the intervention? Could gender mainstreaming have been improved in planning, implementation or follow up?
2. Has the project had any positive or negative effects on gender equality?

Although included in the project proposal (with a specific role for the OFF Board to oversee that due attention is paid to gender equality in B2B Doc's work²⁸), B2B Doc reports suggest that gender equality has not been a specific focus of the project. Instead,

²⁶ Although the data are incomplete, at least 25 projects have been able to secure additional funding of at least EUR 800,000 as a result of B2B Doc support.

²⁷ The Sundance Film Festival is the largest independent film festival in the USA and is widely regarded as the best and most important festival of its kind in the world. Awards such as that garnered by the makers of 'The Earth is Blue as an Orange' are highly sought after, the competition is fierce, and winning such an award opens numerous doors for the film to be shown and seen by a significant international audience.

²⁸ B2B Doc: Project proposal for 2017-2020, page 5.

according to their written reports, gender equality has been addressed ‘organically’ – there are similar numbers, if not more, women working in the documentary filmmaking business in target countries and so gender representativeness in activities is almost guaranteed; many of the films have strong female protagonists; some focus specifically on issues related to women’s rights; and at least two projects focus on the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning), and intersex (LGBTQI) persons. But while B2B Doc reports suggest that there is no need to focus on it, there **have** been some efforts to enhance gender equality – a workshop has been held on the topic with a second one planned; filmmakers are encouraged to identify and highlight issues related to gender in their films during workshops; and some aspects of gender equality have reportedly been mainstreamed into workshops and activities B2B Doc conducts. It would seem that, rather than having no focus on gender equality, it is more accurate to say that B2B Doc has not fully reported on what they have done or achieved in this area. This reinforces again the need for reports to focus on the results and objectives of the project and to report against indicators in the results framework.

When it comes to whether or not the project had any positive or negative effects on gender equality, similar problems arise as to measuring impact generally – it is difficult to measure whether anything has changed and, even if changes have occurred, it would be difficult to attribute them to B2B Doc. However, there is the potential for impact given that many of the films have a focus on gender (including LGBTQI persons) that might not be possible without B2B Doc support, many have strong female protagonists, and at least some deal directly with gender-related issues.

3.7 CONFLICT SENSITIVITY

The following questions were included in the evaluation:

Evaluation questions
1. Has the project been designed and implemented in a conflict sensitive manner?
2. Have any conflicts arisen – internally or between partners? If so, to what extent was the project able to respond to and deal with these?

There is no specific focus on conflict sensitivity in the design of the project. And according to all of those consulted, no conflicts have ever arisen between participants at events or internally that B2B Doc needed to deal with. Although these might be expected given that Ukraine is currently in serious conflict with Russia and that Russian filmmakers are now included in B2B Doc events, it was widely reported that documentary filmmakers are all ‘on the same side’ and that it would be most unlikely to find anyone in the B2B Doc network that was in favour of Russian aggression and expansionism.

However, based on discussions with Sida at the start of the assignment, it would seem that this issue was included in the evaluation because of potential conflicts that might arise if Azerbaijan is included in the new phase given the ongoing Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Although there will always be the potential

for conflict amongst participants from different countries, this will hopefully be carefully considered during the research into adding Azerbaijan that is currently underway and steps taken to ensure the project is able to resolve any conflicts that might arise.

3.8 SUSTAINABILITY

OECD/DAC define sustainability as the extent to which the net benefits of a project will continue, or are likely to continue, should the project come to an end²⁹. The inception report included the following evaluation questions related to the sustainability of the project:

Evaluation questions
1. Is it likely that the benefits of the project are sustainable?
2. What sustainability planning has been done and/or implemented since the start of the project?

Given that the project focuses on building skills and capacity of filmmakers and in establishing networks, there is a high probability that the benefits of the project would continue to be felt even if the project were to end. However, those benefits would fade over time and would no longer be available to new filmmakers.

Although B2B Doc has received some funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Swedish Institute, Sida is by far the largest donor at present and any reduction of funding or a decision not to fund a further phase would be catastrophic. B2B Doc is aware of the dangers of being so reliant on one development partner and, according to its 2018-19 report, had already begun scanning funds within the European Union, the Nordic Council of Ministers and other national or regional funds that might be interested in supporting culture and freedom of expression in the region. This scope has reportedly widened since Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova have entered into agreements with the EU that would open doors to receiving EU funds. However, none of these attempts to attract additional funds have borne fruit as yet and there is still no clear-cut resource mobilisation strategy or anyone specifically dedicated to fundraising. And while further grants might be possible from the Swedish Institute in future, B2B Doc is not eligible for these as an NGO until the current grants have been finalised and narrative and financial reports approved by the Institute and until the NGO has been in existence for a minimum of two years.

As a result, should no further Sida funds be made available, benefits would be lost over time and there is no current organisation or network that would be able to fill the gap: although there are similar projects in the region, they are generally much smaller, have fewer countries, and conduct way fewer activities than B2B Doc.

²⁹ *Op. Cit.* page 12.

4 Conclusions and lessons learned

4.1 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

4.1.1 Relevance and coherence

The B2B Doc project is based on extensive consultation and a deep understanding of the needs of filmmakers in post-Soviet countries and was highly **relevant** at the time of design. There have been very few issues to which it has needed to respond in the relatively short period since inception in July 2017 and has largely remained relevant over time. Although some activities were not supported (in the case of formal working groups) or not possible (in the case of providing grants to filmmakers), the project has adapted well: the network has developed significantly even without formal working groups to drive it in each country, and many filmmakers have received travel and accommodation support even though production grants could not be provided. The project is widely regarded as **coherent** with the support that others are providing and was reported by those responsible for such projects as highly complementary.

When it comes to lessons learned and how the support provided by B2B Doc might be made more relevant in a potential new phase, very few suggestions were received other than the following:

- The new project could include grants to filmmakers to develop, finalise and market their films. Although grants were included in the current project document, this was not allowed under the agreement with Sida and it is highly unlikely that Sida would consider including sub-granting in a future phase. But while a fund might be created by B2B Doc in future using funds from other development partners than Sida, this is not feasible. B2B Doc is not sufficiently experienced or capacitated to act as a grant-maker, and the fiduciary and other risks implicit in grant-making are too severe for B2B Doc to act in such a capacity. Instead, an alternative approach of contributing to a fund managed by others or even sitting on the board or decision-making structures of such a fund might be considered in future if (a) such a fund comes into being or can be found and (b) if B2B Doc is able to raise funds from development partners who have no objection to their funds being used this way.
- Support that is currently only provided up to rough cut stage could be extended to include support up to final cut. This was not generally supported though: many argued that it could lead to mentors/tutors imposing their own vision onto films rather than allowing filmmakers to decide for themselves what the final product should look like.
- There is scope for B2B Doc to consider creating their own platform to broadcast films. However, since the rights to the films B2B Doc supports are owned by others, B2B Doc would usually have to pay to host the films or wait for the rights to run out. Mindful of that, many of those consulted were of the opinion that it would be

easier, and better, for B2B Doc to simply include links on their site to other sites where the films can be streamed or downloaded.

Of more importance though is the need for any future project to adapt to the current and any future pandemics. Although the most negative effects of the current COVID-19 pandemic will hopefully be over by the end of the current project, it is very uncertain as to how much travel will be possible and there is always the possibility of a similar outbreak in the near future. Coupled with the ongoing climate crisis, it was suggested by some of those consulted that a future phase might be more relevant if more long-distance learning were to be provided and if other means could be introduced to reduce the level of international travel currently required by the project's design.

4.1.2 Effectiveness

Similarly, although the project is currently very **effective** and is achieving or has already achieved targets set in the project proposal, effectiveness could be severely hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic over the remainder of the current project period and even under a future phase depending on how long the outbreak lasts and what the long-term impact will be. Although activities related to capacity development are relatively easy to adapt and even better videoconferencing applications and programmes can be expected given the ever-increasing demand, and while film festivals may increasingly rely on online screenings, adapting awareness-raising and networking activities may prove more difficult given how reliant these are on face-to-face interactions. While no concrete suggestions are made at this time, it is noted that everyone in the filmmaking industry will have similar problems and B2B Doc will need to track these discussions and engage in them, together with their filmmakers, to ensure that they are on board with any changes that might emerge.

4.1.3 Efficiency

Although B2B Doc has had serious challenges in financial reporting, it is widely reported to be very **efficiently** implemented. There is some indication that budgeting and reporting will improve now that new staff have been brought on board and some training has been sourced but financial management capacity may still be required once B2B Doc's capacity has been fully assessed. The current evaluation was not specifically required to undertake a capacity assessment of B2B Doc though and B2B Doc has yet to undertake a thorough assessment or to establish where capacity building (including on financial management and reporting) could be obtained in addition to or instead of relying on Sida for this. The current Board also has both oversight and executive management roles, which is not conducive to realise transparency and accountability.

Given that transport and accommodation for project staff and tutors consumes a considerable amount of funding, some discussion was had with both B2B Doc and stakeholders as to whether costs could be reduced by establishing a regional office or offices in one or more of the partner countries during a future phase. Although this might help to reduce costs should the project focus in future on institution building (where it might help to have someone based in a country to meet with funding bodies

and TV channels more regularly), there was little support for the idea from B2B Doc or many of the partners and filmmakers consulted. According to these:

- The costs in establishing such an office would probably outweigh the benefits. Local network members who are best qualified to staff a local office would be reluctant to take the position if it means stepping out of their roles as producers or directors unless there were significant financial benefits for them. On the other hand, sending out staff from Sweden, or recruiting internationally, would be very expensive.
- If a regional office were established, it could lead to resentment amongst members of the network in other countries who might question whether decisions are being made to favour those in the host nation.
- The whole idea with the network is that it is regional. To have an office in a city that only hosts one or two out of a dozen events in various target countries would not really address the issue since travel would still be required by those in the host country to events in other countries, and tutors etc. would still need to travel from Sweden and elsewhere for events.
- One of the fundamental principles underlying the project is the fact that filmmakers in post-Soviet countries need to learn from colleagues in countries where filmmaking is more advanced. As a result, tutors will always need to be from, and will most probably be based in, countries in Western Europe and would be unlikely to agree to relocate to Ukraine (suggested as the best option for a regional office) or any of the other countries.
- Instead of relying on national offices or a regional office, B2B Doc has formed relationships with film festivals in partner countries that act, to some degree, as representatives of the project. For now, it is argued by B2B Doc and others that this serves the same purpose as national offices or a regional office and is more cost-effective.

Although there is some dispute as to the rate of underspending in the project (which is hard to determine accurately given the manner in which financial reports are presented), there is some concern around the potential impact that the COVID-19 pandemic might have on the ability of B2B Doc to utilise the remaining budget and/or any extra Sida funding if the grant is extended. B2B Doc has already experienced the effects of the virus directly with the cancellation of the Docudays Festival and all of their events – including their flagship Producer meet Producer event – as a result. Although they are already taking steps to determine how to mitigate the effects of the cancellation of the festival, there is a very real danger that other events and activities will be cancelled or curtailed over the remainder of the project period.

Importantly, as described in Section 1.1, agreements currently in place with Sida and the Swedish Institute are with OFF and Dixit International respectively. Although the B2B Doc NGO will take over the agreement with Sida if there is to be a further phase, and while Azerbaijan is a Sida target country allowing Sida funds to be used to support filmmakers there, Russia is not a Sida target country and Swedish funds cannot be used to support it. This distinction between those countries supported by Sida and Russia appears to have led the network to see the grants from Sida and the Swedish Institute as separate projects even though, in reality, the support provided to Russian filmmakers

is essentially the same as that provided to others. Russian filmmakers also participate in events together with filmmakers from Sida target countries. Separate reports are submitted to each donor and funds need to be carefully managed, especially where events include filmmakers from Sida-targeted countries and Russia in the same event. Not only is this both time consuming and contrary to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), in the absence of a combined annual report detailing all activities, anyone unfamiliar with B2B Doc might not get the full picture of what B2B Doc is achieving or capable of. Should additional development partners come on board in future, it will be somewhat difficult for them to do without creating new ‘projects’ for them to support, which will in turn increase the administrative and financial management burden.

4.1.4 Impact and gender equality

While it is impossible to attribute any changes in levels of democracy and respect for human rights in any of the target countries to B2B Doc, the project has increased freedom of expression for filmmakers and viewers and certainly has the potential to create at least some **impact** at the higher level. More directly, the project has significantly improved the lot of filmmakers in the region: not only have critical skills been acquired, but filmmakers have been able to source funding and produce films that might otherwise be difficult, if not impossible, to produce without the support of B2B Doc.

Given how central **gender equality** is to all Sida development cooperation support, it is not surprising that comments in B2B Doc reports that no specific support to gender equality is required would raise concerns. However, it is clear that, while more could be done, the project does in fact have a focus on gender equality that could be better reflected in their reports. Although it is difficult to measure what impact it is having, there has been a conscious effort to get filmmakers to identify and highlight gender issues already included in their films, workshops have been amended to include a focus on gender, and many of the films supported by the project have a focus on gender directly or indirectly.

Some additional suggestions were also received for how gender mainstreaming might be improved:

- Introducing a ‘quota’ system. This was not supported by the majority of those consulted on the basis that it would force B2B Doc to include support to a certain number of projects even where these might have no chance of securing funds or reaching an international market.
- Having a specific call for projects focused on gender. This was not supported by most of those consulted for similar reasons to the resistance to a quota. In addition, it is noted that this does not reflect how B2B Doc currently operates: B2B Doc does not issue calls for proposals but rather responds to requests for assistance.
- Including a specific focus on gender in their workshops. According to B2B Doc, this has already been done, but workshops or webinars on specific issues such as sexual harassment and suppression of women in the film industry were also suggested.

- Collaboration with other organisations supporting filmmakers (such as female filmmakers' networks that already exist). According to some of those consulted, members of these organisations could also be added to the Board (especially once it becomes more independent) or become part of selection panels for which projects to support.
- Highlight in their communication materials and on their website that gender equality is a focus so that they do not have to keep repeating the message.

4.1.5 Conflict

No **conflicts** have arisen within the project and it has thus not had to respond to any conflict. That might well change though, particularly if Azerbaijan is added to the list of target countries under a new phase of the project.

4.1.6 Sustainability

Although the project is achieving **sustainability of benefits** by building the capacity of filmmakers and establishing a wide network between filmmakers from target countries and with producers and other decision-makers in other countries, the support to filmmakers in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine is clearly not sustainable without further funding from Sida or another development partner. The impact of any reduction of Sida funding or a decision not to support a future phase would thus have major implications for the current project. Even though there is some expectation that Sida will indeed continue to provide support, nothing is certain in the current climate.

4.2 TOWARDS A NEW THEORY OF CHANGE

The ToR note that the project proposal lacks a substantial theory of change analysis and required the evaluators to further elaborate the intervention logic or theory of change in the inception report. Based on the project document and revised results framework submitted as part of the application for a contract extension, the following **draft theory of change statement** was included in the inception report:

If the capacity of filmmakers in post-Soviet countries is developed in key areas of the filmmaking business such as production skills, trailer making, pitching and fundraising; and *if* filmmakers in these countries are supported to build relations and partnerships and to better network and collaborate with each other and with filmmakers, festivals and others in other countries; and *if* they are encouraged and assisted to focus on key democracy and human rights issues (including freedom of speech); *then* filmmakers will be better equipped to secure funding from sources inside and outside their home countries and to secure media outlets for the films they make focused on human rights and democracy; *ultimately contributing to* better democracy and respect for human rights in partner countries and the region.

This was used as a starting point during a theory of change roundtable discussion with B2B Doc project staff in Stockholm. Although limited from what was originally intended as a result of the inability for the team leader to travel to Stockholm, the discussion with B2B Doc included a brief introduction to the theory of change concept

and key terms used in it before discussing what some of the main components of a future theory of change might include – particularly the overall objective and expected outcomes.

The discussion led to the following suggestions:

- The current **overall objective** includes a mix of high-level impact (improving conditions for democracy and human rights) and more immediate outcomes (enhanced interactivity and capacity of the region's documentary film industry). To fit more closely with the definition of 'overall objective', this level of the theory of change should focus on the higher level. With that in mind, it was agreed that any future theory of change should include 'enhanced democracy and respect for human rights, including the right to freedom of expression, in partner countries' as the overall objective.
- Although phrased as 'purposes' in both the original project proposal and latest results framework, the project already has three, relatively clearly stated **outcomes**. These are somewhat cumbersome though and might be simplified to two interlinked outcomes, both of which would be expected to contribute to the overall objective of enhanced democracy and respect for human rights:
 - Increased capacity of filmmakers in partner countries. This would include all capacity development outputs and activities for filmmakers, including those focused on human rights, gender equality and democracy.
 - Increased access to funds and resources. This would include all outputs and activities aimed at networking, linking filmmakers to co-producers and other sources of funding, and assisting filmmakers to secure distribution of their films. Although the issue is still under discussion amongst B2B Doc project management, it might also include support to what B2B Doc refers to as 'institution building' – building understanding within funding institutions, television stations and existing guilds and unions of filmmakers of the importance of documentary films and their messages; and possibly re-introducing the concept of working groups or the like made up of project partners that might transition into guilds or unions.

It was generally agreed that the draft theory of change included in the inception report is largely accurate. Taking into account the discussions at the theory of change roundtable discussion, the following, slightly revised, theory of change statement is suggested for B2B Doc to consider as it begins to finalise its new project and to further develop its intervention logic:

If the capacity of filmmakers in post-Soviet countries is developed in key areas of the filmmaking business such as production skills, trailer making, pitching and fundraising; and if filmmakers in these countries are supported to build relations and partnerships and to better network and collaborate with each other and with filmmakers, festivals and others in other countries; and if they are encouraged and assisted to focus on key democracy and human rights issues including freedom of expression and gender equality; then filmmakers will be better equipped to secure

funding from sources inside and outside their home countries and to secure media outlets for the films they make; *ultimately contributing to* enhanced democracy and respect for human rights in partner countries and the region.

While there was some discussion around **indicators**, it was agreed that such a discussion is both premature and falls outside the scope of the current assignment. Similarly, it is only once the theory of change is finalised that B2B Doc can begin to finalise its **outputs** and **activities**. Some discussion was held with B2B Doc staff though on the **assumptions** underlying the project, as originally conceived, and what assumptions are already being made with regard to any future phase of Sida support. The discussion was somewhat curtailed by the amount of time available (and the challenges associated with conducting such an activity via videoconference) but it will be important for B2B Doc staff to focus on the assumptions made as they move towards a new theory of change and its related intervention logic, particularly when it comes to those related to the manner in which activities are implemented given the need to adapt to a post-COVID-19 world.

5 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for the remainder of the current project as well as for any future phase. The recommendations that follow have been ranked from most important to those that are less critical but that should nonetheless be considered.

5.1 CURRENT PHASE

Recommendations for B2B Doc

- As an overall recommendation, there is a clear need for B2B Doc to respond to the current COVID-19 pandemic to ensure its activities and support remain relevant and effective. B2B Doc is already moving more of its capacity building support online and making use of available technology, but it will need to consult widely and plan carefully when it comes to how to build and maintain the network should travel remain constrained.
- There is an urgent need for an effective monitoring and evaluation system to be developed within the available budget. B2B Doc should also give consideration to appointing an existing staff member or employing a new staff member (full- or part-time) to specifically focus on monitoring and evaluation.
- Although additional financial and narrative reporting capacity has been gained, there is nonetheless a need to ensure that both narrative and financial reporting by B2B Doc is improved. Narrative reports should focus on reporting against the results framework and indicators and should highlight any impact the project is having in the lives of filmmakers, progress with films, and grants and accolades received by partners. And financial reports should show budget, actual income, and expenditure to create a clearer picture of whether or not the project is absorbing funds provided to it.
- To reduce its reliance on Sida and increase sustainability, B2B Doc should develop a resource mobilisation strategy identifying all possible sources of funding and should consider making one senior staff member responsible for ensuring the strategy is implemented. A standard proposal should be prepared that can be speedily amended as appropriate to enable B2B Doc to respond quickly to any funding opportunities that may arise.
- B2B Doc should immediately revise all job descriptions for staff, including members of the Board that will be playing a role in project implementation, to ensure that the roles and functions of each staff/board member when it comes to decision-making and oversight are clearly spelled out.
- Within the available budget, B2B Doc should contract a thorough capacity needs assessment to determine where gaps currently exist and where they might be expected to increase should new countries be added or the number of film projects increased. Based on this assessment and a scoping of what capacity development support can be provided by both Sida and others, B2B Doc should develop and

adopt a staff development strategy that is not exclusively dependent on Sida support.

- Within the available budget, B2B Doc should consider contracting in a gender-equality specialist to conduct a thorough ‘gender lens’ assessment of all training programmes and materials and communication materials to determine how gender-equality might be better mainstreamed and what other specific training might be required.
- To increase the outreach of the films they support, and to ensure the messages therein are communicated to as wide an audience as possible, B2B Doc should provide links on its website, Facebook page and other communication materials enabling users to find where the films can be streamed and/or downloaded.
- To prevent any allegations of unfairness in the staff appointment process, B2B Doc should develop a clear, open and transparent staff recruitment policy, strategy and procedure as soon as possible.
- Within the current and future restrictions related to travel, B2B Doc should reach out to all Swedish Embassies in its current partner countries to raise awareness of the project, consider hosting screenings of films, and to determine whether there are any additional linkages or sources of funding that could be maximised.
- The policy of requiring those funded by B2B Doc to travel to festivals etc. to share a room with others should be reconsidered. At minimum, those whose travel and accommodation is being funded should first be given the option of sharing rooms rather than being required to do so.

Recommendation for Sida

- It can already be anticipated that the project will underspend its current budget, particularly as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are felt and activities are cancelled or curtailed. Taking into account the recommendations for B2B Doc above, Sida should immediately enter into discussion with B2B Doc to agree how best available funds can be used, including for new activities not specifically included in the project proposal, to avoid these funds being forfeited at the end of the project period.

5.2 FUTURE PHASE

Recommendations for B2B Doc

- In consultation with Sida, B2B Doc should give consideration to a holistic programme of activities and budget that covers the entirety of its work post 2020, rather than separate projects for each development partner, and that development partners can contribute to according to their choice of activities and/or partner countries. All development partners contributing to the programme should also be encouraged to agree to one consolidated financial and narrative report, in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.
- B2B Doc should prioritise the finalisation of its theory of change, complemented with a fully developed intervention logic that includes activities and outputs, for adoption by the Board.

- Based on lessons learned during the remainder of the current project, the designers of the next project proposal to Sida should be mindful to include a specific focus on how the fallout from the current COVID-19 pandemic, and any future viral outbreaks, will be addressed. The project proposal should at minimum include alternative proposals for all types of activities requiring travel (both international and within countries), face-to-face interactions and possible restrictions on large groups.
- As the project develops, B2B Doc should establish an independent Board, separate from project management, to provide effective oversight and decision-making over how the project is being implemented and whether it is achieving its intended results. When establishing the new Board, consideration should be given to both ensuring that the Board is gender-balanced and to including a representative of a female filmmakers' network on the Board.
- To ensure that any future conflicts are properly managed, B2B Doc should develop a conflict resolution and mitigation strategy for adoption by the Board as soon as possible during, or even before, any possible future phase.

Recommendation for Sida

- Based the results of the current evaluation, and depending on revisions to its strategy and availability of funds, Sida should continue to provide funding to B2B Doc. Given that documentary films often take many years to complete, consideration should be given to increasing the project period to three to four years (with the fourth year being used as a phase out period). This will also allow B2B Doc to formulate an exit strategy for Sida-funding whilst simultaneously planning to secure funding from other sources.

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference



Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of Baltic to Black Sea Documentary Network 2017-2020

Date: 2020-01-08

1. General information

1.1 Introduction

The Baltic to Black Sea Documentary Network project (B2B Doc) is aligned with the Results' Strategy for Sweden's Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014-2020. The project has relevance under the results area 2) Strengthened democracy, greater respect for human rights and a more fully developed state under the rule of law and the - Freer and more independent media. The countries where implementation takes place are Georgia, Armenia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova. The project is planned, implemented, and reported by Oberoende Filmars Förbund (OFF).

1.2 Evaluation rationale

This is the first cooperation project of B2B Doc which is funded by Sida. Hence, the partnership is new, and the project itself has undergone changes throughout the implementation phase. The project implementing team is inexperienced in managing development cooperation projects, and there has been a need to modify expected results, activity plan and budget on several occasions. An evaluation will help in defining future needs and opportunities for possible Sida support, as a new results' strategy for the Eastern Partnership countries will be valid from 2021.

1.3 Evaluation object: Project/programme to be evaluated

The evaluation object is **Baltic to Black Sea Documentary Network 2018-2020**.

The level of freedom of speech varies between countries in the post-Soviet region, but for many of the countries, it is valid to say that TV channels are often politicized, being either state-owned and propagandistic or run by private owners/oligarchs with a particular agenda, very often in line with the state one. These stations take very little interest in media content that is not exactly in line with their own political views or commercial interests. There is significant evidence that governments organize propaganda campaigns and work strategically in order to influence the citizens in a certain direction. In addition, many of the countries are subject of propaganda and disinformation from Russian news media. People living in the targeted countries are often victims of this disinformation and have difficulties separating between correct and faked or manipulated information. Access to

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independent and balanced information in the targeted countries is limited and the independent media space has shrunk in general. Independent media is fighting for their survival under increasingly difficult economic circumstances. Public services are absent or in best case under construction. Dissidence is often treated with harassment, violence, prosecution on false charges or with defamation, extremism and other criminal offenses designed to limit free speech. One of the main challenges for independent media/public services is production of other content than news, such as documentary films. The project was during Sida's appraisal stage assessed to be highly relevant in relation to the growing needs in the region and it targets an area that is most difficult to address. Work with high quality content documentaries is most challenging for independent/public service media outlets in the Eastern Partnership region.

Objectives and theory of change

The project proposal lacks a substantial theory of change analysis. The analysis on how the intervention will make an impact is limited to briefly describing an overall objective which is “to contribute to enhanced interactivity and capacity of the region's documentary film industry, thus increasing the sustainability of business initiatives and improving the basis for democracy in the post-Soviet region”.

The overall objective can be broken down into three main purposes:

- Partnerships: Established relations and partnerships between filmmakers, production companies, young filmmakers, media industry, public institutions and distributors in the region.
- Understanding and learning the business: Increased knowledge among the filmmakers on how business and co-production is conducted in a rapidly changing European media market.
- Democracy and freedom of speech: Spreading values of democracy and freedom of speech.

Target groups

Filmmakers, producers, distributors and film students.

The agreed amount 2017-2020 is 17 100 000 SEK. Sida is currently finalizing an assessment of a potential extension of the programme covering 6 months, July – December 2020, amounting to roughly 3 MSEK. There has been no previous evaluation commissioned by Sida, but an internal governance audit was commissioned by Sida at the very start of the cooperation.

A lot of work and dialogue has been invested during the project period concerning the budget. There has been a need to make sure that the overall budget is detailed enough and well-structured in order to ensure transparency, efficiency and easy follow up.

Other sources of funding

B2B Doc originated in a private company, Dixit International, with funding from the Swedish Institute "Creative Force" Program. It received funding up to 475 000 SEK from Swedish Institute during 2013-14, and 500 SEK in 2019 to include Russian filmmakers in the network. OFF received € 90 000 in 2016 from the Nordic Council of Ministers to engage filmmakers from the Nordic and Baltic countries in the B2B Doc network. Dixit International has been encouraged by the Swedish Institute to apply for more funding for Russian filmmakers and seed funding to include Azerbaijan as a new target country. These applications must be made by Dixit International until the B2B Doc NGO has the two year record of activity required to make applications to the Swedish Institute. B2B Doc is expected to make a number of new applications for complementary funding during 2020.

2. The assignment

2.1 Evaluation purpose: Intended use and intended users

The purpose or intended use of the evaluation is to

- serve as an input for Sida on which decisions can be based in the processes of assessing if a new phase of the project is deemed relevant and cost-efficient and should receive funding from Sida.
- help Sida and B2B DOC project team/OFF to assess progress of the on-going project to learn from what works well and less well. The evaluation will be used to inform decisions on how project implementation may be adjusted and improved in a potential future phase.

The primary intended users of the Evaluation are:

- Sida's unit for Eastern Europe and Thematic Support
- Implementers of the B2B Doc project, i.e. OFF and associated consultants (hereinafter called "B2B Doc project team/OFF")

The evaluation is to be designed, conducted and reported to meet the needs of the intended users and tenderers shall elaborate in the tender how this will be ensured during the evaluation process. Other stakeholders that should be kept informed about the evaluation will be determined by B2B Doc project team/OFF.

During the inception phase, the evaluator and the users will agree on who will be responsible for keeping the various stakeholders informed about the evaluation.

2.2 Evaluation scope

The scope of the evaluation and the intervention logic or theory of change of the project shall be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report.

2.3 Evaluation objective: Criteria and questions

The objectives of this evaluation are to

- evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the project as an input to upcoming discussions concerning the decision on whether the project shall receive funding for a new phase or not.
- evaluate the impact and rights perspective of the project and formulate recommendations on how the project management team can improve and adjust implementation.

The evaluation questions are:

Efficiency

- Can the costs for the project be justified by its results?
- Has the project been implemented in the most efficient way? If not, what alternatives are there?

Effectiveness

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- To which extent have the project contributed to intended outcomes? If so, why? If not, why not?
- Have the M&E system delivered robust and useful information that could be used to assess progress towards outcomes and contribute to learning?
- To what extent has lessons learned from what works well and less well been used to improve and adjust project/programme implementation?
- What are the major factors, internally and externally, influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?

Impact

- What is the overall impact of the project in terms of direct or indirect, negative and positive results?
- What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?
- Is it likely that the benefits of the project are sustainable?

Gender equality

- How has gender equality been integrated into the design, planning and implementation of the intervention? To what extent has the intervention contributed to the improvement of gender equality? Has the project had any positive or negative effects on gender equality? Could gender mainstreaming have been improved in planning, implementation or follow up?

Conflict sensitivity

- Has the project been designed and implemented in a conflict sensitive manner?

Questions are expected to be developed in the tender by the tenderer and further developed during the inception phase of the evaluation.

2.4 Evaluation approach and methods

It is expected that the evaluator describes and justifies an appropriate evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection in the tender. The evaluation design, methodology and methods for data collection and analysis are expected to be fully developed and presented in the inception report.

Limitations to the chosen approach/methodology and methods shall be made explicit by the evaluator and the consequences of these limitations discussed in the tender. The evaluator shall to the extent possible, present mitigation measures to address them. A clear distinction is to be made between evaluation approach/methodology and methods.

A *gender responsive* approach/methodology, methods, tools and data analysis techniques should be used.

Sida's approach to evaluation is *utilization-focused*, which means the evaluator should facilitate the *entire evaluation process* with careful consideration of how everything that is done will affect the use of the evaluation. It is therefore expected that the evaluators, in their tender, present i) how intended users are to participate in and contribute to the evaluation process and ii) methodology and methods for data collection that create space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

In cases where sensitive or confidential issues are to be addressed in the evaluation, evaluators should ensure an evaluation design that do not put informants and stakeholders at risk during the data collection phase or the dissemination phase.

2.5 Organisation of evaluation management

Sida has composed the current ToR, to which the B2B Doc project team/OFF have contributed to and agreed on. The B2B Doc project team/OFF will be provided with an opportunity to comment on the Inception Report, as well as on the Final Report, but will not be involved in the management of the Evaluation. Hence, the Commissioner will evaluate tenders, approve the Inception Report and the Final Report of the Evaluation. There will be one start-up meeting with B2B Doc project team/OFF and one with Sida. The debriefing meeting will be held with the Commissioner only.

2.6 Evaluation quality

All Sida's evaluations shall conform to OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation¹. The evaluators shall use the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation². The evaluators shall specify how quality assurance will be handled by them during the evaluation process.

2.7 Time schedule and deliverables

It is expected that a time and work plan is presented in the tender and further detailed in the inception report. The evaluation shall be carried out February-April 2020. The timing of any field visits, surveys and interviews need to be settled by the evaluator in dialogue with the main stakeholders during the inception phase.

The table below lists key deliverables for the evaluation process. Alternative deadlines for deliverables may be suggested by the consultant and negotiated during the inception phase.

Deliverables	Participants	Deadlines (<u>Tentative</u> dates)
1. Start-up meetings in Stockholm (2 meetings)	Evaluation team Sida B2B Doc	10 February
2. Inception report		26 February
3. Inception meeting in Stockholm	Evaluation team Sida B2B Doc	9 March
4. Comments from intended users to evaluators		To be sent to evaluators ahead of the inception meeting
5. Data collection, analysis, report writing and quality assurance	Evaluators	10-27 March

¹ DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, OECD, 2010.

² Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014.

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6. Debriefing/validation meeting	Evaluation team Sida	31 March
7. Draft evaluation report		14 April
8. Comments from intended users to evaluators		21 April
9. Final evaluation report		30 April

The inception report will form the basis for the continued evaluation process and shall be approved by Sida before the evaluation proceeds to implementation. The inception report should be written in English and cover evaluability issues and interpretations of evaluation questions, present the evaluation approach/methodology (including how a utilization-focused and gender responsive approach will be ensured), methods for data collection and analysis as well as the full evaluation design. A clear distinction between the evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection shall be made. All limitations to the methodology and methods shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed. A specific time and work plan, including number of hours/working days for each team member, for the remainder of the evaluation should be presented. The time plan shall allow space for reflection and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

The final report shall be written in English and be professionally proof read. The final report should have clear structure and follow the report format in the Sida Decentralised Evaluation Report Template for decentralised evaluations (see Annex C). The executive summary should be maximum 3 pages. The evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection used shall be clearly described and explained in detail and a clear distinction between the two shall be made. All limitations to the methodology and methods shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed. Findings shall flow logically from the data, showing a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions. Conclusions should be substantiated by findings and analysis. Evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations should reflect a gender analysis/an analysis of identified and relevant cross-cutting issues. Recommendations and lessons learned should flow logically from conclusions. Recommendations should be specific, directed to relevant stakeholders and categorised as a short-term, medium-term and long-term. The report should be no more than 35 pages excluding annexes (including Terms of Reference and Inception Report). The evaluator shall adhere to the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation³.

The evaluator shall, upon approval of the final report, insert the report into the Sida Decentralised Evaluation Report for decentralised evaluations and submit it to Nordic Morning (in pdf-format) for publication and release in the Sida publication data base. The order is placed by sending the approved report to sida@nordicmorning.com, always with a copy to the responsible Sida Programme Officer as well as Sida's Evaluation Unit (evaluation@sida.se). Write "Sida decentralised evaluations" in the email subject field. The following information must always be included in the order to Nordic Morning:

1. The name of the consulting company.
2. The full evaluation title.
3. The invoice reference "ZZ980601".
4. Type of allocation "sakanslag".
5. Type of order "digital publicering/publikationsdatabas".

³ Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014

2.8 Evaluation team qualification

In addition to the qualifications already stated in the framework agreement for evaluation services, the evaluation team shall include the following competencies:

- Academic degree in Development, Gender Studies, Social Science, Political Science, Democracy, Human Rights, Media, Journalism and/or other relevant areas.
- Professional experience in the area of democracy and human rights, freedom of expression, media.
- Experience of evaluation of international development cooperation work, particularly in Eastern Partnership countries.
- Excellent command of English. Russian is highly desirable.

A CV for each team member shall be included in the call-off response. It should contain a full description of relevant qualifications and professional work experience.

It is important that the competencies of the individual team members are complimentary. It is highly recommended that local consultants are included in the team if appropriate.

The evaluators must be independent from the evaluation object and evaluated activities, and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

2.9 Financial and human resources

The maximum budget amount available for the evaluation is 400 000 SEK.

The contact person at Sida is Alexandra Åhlén, coordinator at Unit for Eastern Europe and Thematic Support. The contact person should be consulted if any problems arise during the evaluation process.

Relevant Sida documentation will be provided by Alexandra Åhlén, coordinator at Unit for Eastern Europe and Thematic Support.

Contact details to intended users/beneficiaries (cooperation partners, Swedish Embassies, other donors etc.) will be provided by B2B Doc project team/OFF and Sida.

The evaluator will be required to arrange the logistics, incl. interpretation services, connected with preparation of the interview programme, including any necessary security arrangements.

3. Annexes

Annex A: List of key documentation

Results' Strategy for Sweden's Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014-2020 (<https://www.regeringen.se/land--och-regionstrategier/2014/03/ud-14013/>)

Activity project reports for 2017, 2018, 2019 (as annexes)

NB that Sida will provide all relevant documentation, that is not listed here.

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Annex B: Data sheet on the evaluation object

Information on the evaluation object (i.e. project or programme)	
Title of the evaluation object	Baltic to Black Sea Documentary Network
ID no. in PLANIt	11175
Dox no./Archive case no.	17/000639
Activity period (if applicable)	20170701-20200630 (6 months extension underway)
Agreed budget (if applicable)	17 100 000 SEK (3 000 000 SEK extension)
Main sector	Democracy, human rights and gender equality
Name and type of implementing organisation	Oberoende Filmars Förbund (OFF), Association
Aid type	Project support
Swedish strategy	Results' Strategy for Sweden's Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014-2020

Information on the evaluation assignment	
Commissioning unit/Swedish Embassy	Unit for Eastern Europe and Thematic Support
Contact person at unit/Swedish Embassy	Alexandra Åhlén
Timing of evaluation (mid-term, end-of-programme, ex-post or other)	End-of-programme
ID no. in PLANIt (if other than above).	13991 (Evaluation only)

Annex C: Decentralised evaluation report template

Annex D : Project document

Annex 2 Documents consulted

1. Sida: B2B Documentary Film Network 2017-2020 - Appraisal of intervention, final (2017-07-12)
2. Sida/B2B: Agreement Sida and B2B doc project (2017-07-13)
3. Sida: B2B doc Documentary film Network East 2017-2020 - Decision of Amendment of Contribution (2018-11-07)
4. Sida: B2B Doc Documentary film Network East 2017 – 2020. Statement on report - Narrative Report, Financial Report, Audit Report (2018-07-01 – 2019-06-30)
5. Sida: B2B Doc Documentary film Network East 2017 – 2020. Conclusion on Performance (2018-07-01 – 2019-06-30)
6. Sida: Summary in English of Statement of Annual Report, (September 2019)
7. Sida: Summary in English of Conclusion of Performance (September 2019)
8. Sida: Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of Baltic to Black Sea Documentary Network 2017-2020 (2020-01-08)
9. Sida: Looking Back, Moving Forward - Sida Evaluation Manual 2nd revised edition (undated)
10. B2B doc: Project proposal for 2017-2020
11. B2B/Sida/OFF: Agreement on B2B doc between Sida and OFF (2018-11-08)
12. B2B doc: Breakdown of estimated costs, period 2017-07-01 - 2020-06-30 (2019-03-01)
13. B2B doc: Clarifications of narrative report for 2018/2019 (2018-07-01– 2019-06-30)
14. B2B doc: Baltic to black sea documentary network. Application for Project Extension (December 2019)
15. B2B doc: Status update of B2B Doc Results Matrix (2019-12-16)
16. B2B doc: Project proposals incl. risk matrix (undated)
17. B2B doc: Partner organizations in program countries
18. NIRAS: Evaluation of Baltic to Black Sea Documentary Network 2017-2020. Implementation Proposal (2019-01-24).
19. NIRAS: Indevalop's General Evaluation Toolkit - Report template, Inception report template, Reimbursables template, Timesheet template, PowerPoint templates, After Action Review, Evaluation inception report, Evaluation draft and final reports (undated)
20. NIRAS: Human rights-based approach in evaluations (undated)
21. DAC: Guidelines and Reference Series - Quality Standards for Development Evaluation (undated)
22. DAC: Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management (undated)
23. OFF: Progress report B2B doc 2017-07-01 – 2018-06-30. Comments on risks, goals, activities and indicators in the Results Matrix (2018-06-30)

24. OFF: Progress report B2B doc 2018-07-01 – 2019-06-30. Comments on risks, goals, activities and indicators in the Results Matrix (2019-09-06)
25. IDS: Theories of Change and Embedding Reflection (June 2013)
26. OXFAM: Research guidelines - Writing executive summary (November 2015)
27. KPMG: Summary of organizational audit of OFF (2017-01-18)
28. WHO Gender Mainstreaming Manual for Health Managers Programmes and policies (undated)

Annex 3 People consulted

Please note that due to GDPR only the titles and organisations are included.

Job title	Organisation
Coordinator Belarus, Department for Europe and Latin America (current B2B Doc Programme Officer)	Sida
Head of Unit for Afghanistan, Department for Asia, Middle East and Humanitarian Assistance (previous B2B Doc Programme Officer)	Sida
Controller, Department for Europe and Latin America	Sida
Programme Officer (previous B2B Doc Programme Officer)	Sida
Producer / Project ‘owner’ for the Sida project	B2B Doc / DIXIT International
Project Manager	B2B Doc
Administrative Manager	B2B Doc
Consultant and Chairperson of the B2B Doc Board (NGO)	B2B Doc Board
Film director, Sweden	B2B Doc (Tutor and Board Member)
Film Director / Producer, Sweden	B2B Doc (Tutor and Board Member)
Film Producer, Sweden	B2B Doc (Tutor)
Film Producer, Czech Republic	Hypermarketfilm / B2B Doc Tutor
OFF Board Chair, B2B Doc Board Chair and Project Manager	OFF
Toiminnanjohtaja / Executive Director	Finnish Documentary Guild
DocPoint-elokuvatapahtumat ry	
International Projects Manager	Media Resources Management LLC
Director OWH Studio, Moldova	Cronograf International
President FIFD CRONOGRAF	Documentary Film Festival
Executive Director	Ukrainian Motion Picture Association
General Producer	Odessa International Film Festival
Projekta vadītāja / Project Manager	Baltic Sea Documentary Forum (Latvia)
Managing Partner	Pitch The Doc (Poland)
Producer / Program Director	Volia Films / Northern Lights
Festival Director	Nordic Baltic Film
Industry Program Coordinator	Moldox, International Documentary Film Festival (Moldova)

Festival Director	Moldox, International Documentary Film Festival (Moldova)
Head of Industry	Listapad Film Festival, (Belarus)
Director	Institute of Documentary Film, (Czech Republic)
Head of Industry program	Golden Apricot Film Festival, Armenia
Programmer Head of Industry Platform	Docudays UA International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival
The Soviet Garden (Moldova)	
My Granny from Mars (Belarus)	
The Earth is Blue As An Orange (Ukraine)	Albatros Comunicos Film Production
The Earth is Blue As An Orange (Ukraine)	Albatros Comunicos Film Production
Heat Singers. (Ukraine)	
Between Two Wars (Ukraine)	
Between Two Wars (Ukraine)	
“Nothing to be Afraid of” (ex name “Miners”), (Armenia)	
Tonratun (Armenia)	
Tutor Polymers (Russia)	
Electing Ms Santa (Moldova)	
Miss of Poland (Poland)	
Miss of Poland (Poland)	
Miss of Poland (Poland)	
Elevation (Ukraine)	
The Transition (Russia)	
Missing My Body (Georgia)	
Fragments of Ice (Ukraine)	
Artyom’s Upbringing (Belarus)	
Adviser	Nordic Culture Point (Nordisk kulturkontakt)

Director	KPMG
Producer, Belgium Managing Director	Swedish Institute CONGOO The Idea Factory
Commissioning Editor	Current Time TV
Producer	Film production company Diafilm OÜ (Estonia)

Annex 4 Results (Project Proposal and New Results Framework)

Overall objective

Enhanced interactivity and capacity of the region's documentary film industry, thus increasing the sustainability of business initiatives and improving conditions for democracy and human rights in the post-Soviet region.

Results framework in project proposal		Revised results framework (December 2019)		
Purpose 1 - Partnerships		4.3.A Partnerships		
Objective: Establishing relations and partnerships between filmmakers, production companies, young filmmakers, media industry, public institutions and distributors in the region.	Indicator: Programme activities organised at all major festivals in the programme countries.	Goal: Established relations and partnerships between filmmakers, production companies, film schools, media industry, public institutions and distributors through networking and physical meetings.		
Activities	Indicators	Sub-goal	Activities	Indicators
- Establishing relations and partnerships between filmmakers, production	- At least twelve co-produced projects completed or in production	1. Increased awareness in the documentary film environment about the work of B2B Doc and	- Participation in industry events at major film festivals in the programme countries.	a) Number of festivals where B2B Doc has participated

<p>companies, media industry, film high schools, public institutions and distributors across the region;</p> <p>- Creating an online database of documentary filmmakers, who apply to be within B2B Doc network. Each application has to be supported by another member of the network;</p> <p>- Creating a practical way for documentary filmmakers in the post-Soviet region to connect to each other, exchange ideas and find ways to co-operate, bringing their co-productions to the international film market;</p> <p>- Strengthening institutional capacity and practices in the distribution of local funding in the post-Soviet region.</p>	<p>by the end of the project period (budget items 2A, 28, 2C];</p> <p>- At least fifty actively working documentary filmmakers registered in the online database (budget items 1A, IB);</p> <p>- B2B Doc having established active networks of contact organizations and filmmakers in each country and increased transparency in relations between filmmakers and decision-makers (budget items 2C, 2E, 3A).</p>	<p>new relations established between key actors in the B2B programme countries (Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Belarus, Moldova, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland and Sweden)</p>	<p>- Programme events and networking activities organised at the festivals.</p>	<p>b) Number of participants from the programme countries</p> <p>c) Number of activities organised by B2B Doc</p>
		<p>2. Awareness raised about B2B Doc and new contacts established in (other) countries of interest for filmmakers from the programme countries.</p>	<p>- Participation at industry events at major film festivals in countries of interest for filmmakers from the programme countries.</p> <p>- Programme events and networking activities organised at the festivals.</p>	<p>a) Number of festivals in other countries where B2B has participated</p> <p>b) Number of participants from the programme countries participating through B2B Doc</p> <p>c) Number of activities organised by B2B Doc</p> <p>d) Signs of increased awareness of B2B Doc in festival countries</p>
		<p>3. Active cooperation and coproduction in documentary filmmaking between producers and directors from the B2B Doc programme countries.</p>	<p>Creating an internet platform and database for communication within the B2B Doc network. It will have several functions:</p> <p>a) A tool for exchange of ideas and proposals for coproduction.</p>	<p>a) Platform and database established</p> <p>b) Number of visitors registered</p> <p>c) Number of proposals listed on the website</p>

			b) Practical advice for filmmakers and producers. c) Information about B2B activities and grants open to filmmakers in the programme countries.	d) Number of co-productions initiated through the website
		4. Better practices for distribution of local funding in the post-Soviet region through active participation by filmmakers.	- Guidance and workshops for local networks and guilds among filmmakers and producers in the programme countries to strengthen their role in the creation of “best practices” within the distribution of local funding for documentary film. - Study visits for filmmakers from the post-Soviet region to Sweden and Finland.	a) Growth of guilds and/or professional organizations for documentary filmmakers in the post-Soviet region. b) Adoption of best practices for the distribution of local funding
Purpose 2 - Understanding and learning the business		4.3.B - Understanding and learning the business		
Objective Increased knowledge among the filmmakers on how business and co - production is conducted in a rapidly changing European media market.		Goal Increased knowledge among the cooperation partners on how business and co -production is conducted in a rapidly changing European media market.		
Activities	Indicators	Sub-goal	Activities	Indicators

<p>- increasing the knowledge among filmmakers about how business and coproduction is conducted in the rapidly changing European and international film industry and media market:</p> <p>- Opening up creative and business opportunities for documentary filmmakers from both "West" and "East".</p> <p>- Conducting workshops and seminars for directors and producers in the post-Soviet region about the media market.</p> <p>(Plus the following included in the annex but not in the body of the document)</p> <p>- Support of specific projects in terms of training, project development, and exposure to the international market</p>	<p>- B2B Doc has represented its own program activities at several major festivals (budget items 28, 2C, 2D, ZE);</p> <p>- At least one hundred filmmakers in the member countries have gone through training and continuous working group meetings and activities under professional guidance with the intention of increasing knowledge and capacity both artistically and commercially (budget items 28, 2C, 2D, 2E, 38);</p> <p>- Filmmakers in the B2B Network have had the opportunity to present themselves and their projects on the European Film scene (budget items 28, 2C, 38);</p> <p>- The Nordic/Baltic filmmakers have been exposed to tools and methodologies of the often very cinematographically schooled colleagues from the post-Soviet region (budget items 1A, 18, ZC).</p> <p>- Ideas and projects in the post-Soviet countries have received a boost. Films set in the region have been</p>	<p>1. Enhanced professional standard in the production of international documentary films among B2B Doc co-operation partners.</p> <p>2. Establishment of cross-border co-production as a means of increasing quality and financing within documentary filmmaking in the programme countries.</p>	<p>- Seminars on the subject of new methods of producing and financing documentary films within the EU.</p> <p>- Practical workshops for the development of ideas and business models for documentary films.</p> <p>- Matchmaking activities (PmP) at festival industry events.</p> <p>- Propagating the use of the B2B website and database (see 4.3.A, Sub goal 2).</p> <p>- Attracting financiers and commissioners from EU countries to co-pro events.</p> <p>- Early-stage development grants for filmmakers in coproduction.</p>	<p>a) Number of seminars conducted</p> <p>b) Number of attendees at these seminars</p> <p>c) Number of workshops</p> <p>d) Number of attendees at these workshops.</p> <p>e) Evaluation of seminars and workshops</p> <p>a) Number of PmP events.</p> <p>b) Number of participants at PmP events.</p> <p>c) Number of co-productions initiated at PmP events.</p> <p>d) Number of financiers and commissioners, who have taken part in industry events initiated by B2B Doc.</p> <p>e) Improved quality of film projects initiated by cooperation partners through early stage grants.</p>
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	<p>given a greater possibility to reach the world market (budget items 2A, 28, 2C, 2D, 2E, 38).</p> <p>(Plus the following included in the annex but not in the body of the document)</p> <p>At least 12 co-produced projects completed or in production by the end of the project period.</p>			
Purpose 3 - Democracy and freedom of speech				
Objective Spreading values of democracy and freedom of speech.		Goal Enhanced appreciation of the values of democracy, freedom of speech and gender equality in the documentary film business among co-operation partners		
Activities	Indicators	Sub-goal	Activities	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity building for democratic values together with colleagues from the region; - Filmmakers registered in the online database organizing the national working groups in each country; - introducing gender equality as a factor in filmmaking and selection of projects; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An increased number of documentaries have been screened at regional TV stations. TV audiences in the B2B Doc member countries have been increasingly exposed to multiple perspectives on current topical subjects (budget items 1A, 18, 2A, 28, 2C, 2D, 2E, 38); - Working groups within the B2B Doc network have increasingly 	1. Enhanced role of documentary films as a strong contemporary carrier of the values of democracy and freedom of speech.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B2B Doc will assist the cooperation partners in their efforts to promote documentary films and creation of new distribution channels in the programme area. - In the distribution of funds to documentary projects, B2B Doc will promote projects with a clear democratic vision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Development of the documentary filmmaking industry and distribution channels in the post-Soviet region. b) Values of democracy and freedom of speech expressed in films produced by cooperation partners

<p>- B2B Doc must live up to high standards in transparency as an example for its partner organizations.</p>	<p>applied principles of gender equality (budget items 2D, 2E);</p> <p>- Working groups within the B2B Doc network have increasingly applied democratic principles of running the network by electing board members with regular rotation (budget items 1A, 18);</p> <p>- The B2B Doc organization has been able to apply transparency throughout the process (budget items 1A, 1B).</p> <p>(Plus the following included in the annex but not in the body of the document)</p> <p>- The project has been able to set a high standard of democracy in all its activities, internal and external.</p> <p>- Principles of gender equality are generally applied in the network.</p> <p>- The project has been able to apply principles of transparency in all member countries.</p>		<p>- In project implementation, B2B Doc will actively promote basic fundamental democratic principles, including gender equality and transparency.</p>	
		<p>2. Integration of the B2B Doc project with other organizations supporting democracy and freedom of speech in the post-Soviet region.</p>	<p>- B2B Doc will seek cooperation with other NGOs or non-profit organizations working for democracy and freedom of speech in the programme countries.</p> <p>- B2B Doc will respond to initiatives from other NGOs and non-profit organizations with similar objectives and try to coordinate activities with them.</p>	<p>a) Number of organizations with which B2B Doc has established working relations.</p> <p>b) Number of activities carried out together with other organizations.</p> <p>c) Number of B2B Doc supported projects that have received additional funding thanks to this cooperation.</p>



Evaluation of the Baltic to Black Sea Documentary Network 2017–2020

The current report presents an evaluation of the Sida-supported Baltic to Black Sea Documentary Network (B2B Doc) 2017–2020. The project provides support to documentary filmmakers in five post-Soviet countries: Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. It aims to build partnerships between filmmakers in these countries and producers, film festivals and other decision-makers in other countries; to build the capacity of filmmakers to produce high-quality documentaries of international appeal; and to contribute to greater democracy and human rights, including the right to freedom of expression and gender equality. The support provided is adjudged as highly relevant to the needs of filmmakers, activities have largely been effectively and efficiently implemented, and the project has contributed significantly to the ability of filmmakers to produce high quality documentary films, some of which have won international recognition. However, while benefits are sustainable, the project is not currently sustainable without continued Sida funding.

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