Inclusion of persons with disabilities in European Union development cooperation mechanisms

A preliminary study of calls for proposals in geographic and thematic instruments

May 2019

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Acknowledgements by the Research Coordinator
Thanks to all the people participating to the study, with particular thanks to the advisory group (IDDC and EDF) for inputs and comments to the report, to the project managers of Bridging the Gap in Ethiopia, Paraguay and Sudan, Alessia Rogai for support to the overall implementation process. A final thanks to everyone that took the time to meet with the consultants at the EU Delegations in the three countries, implementing partners, organisations of persons with disabilities and everyone else that provided information and testimonies.

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This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Bridging the Gap project and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union,
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# Abbreviations and acronyms

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACP</td>
<td>African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries</td>
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<td>2030 Agenda</td>
<td>2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>Cotonou Agreement</td>
<td>ACP agreement with the European Union</td>
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<td>CRPD</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</td>
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<td>CSO-LA</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities</td>
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<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<td>DCI</td>
<td>Development Cooperation Instrument</td>
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<td>DEVCO</td>
<td>Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>DFAT</td>
<td>Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Australia</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>UK Department for International Development</td>
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<td>DPO</td>
<td>Organisation of Persons with Disabilities</td>
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<td>EDF</td>
<td>European Development Fund</td>
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<td>EIDHR</td>
<td>European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>EU Delegation</td>
<td>European Union Delegation</td>
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<td>GIZ</td>
<td>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit</td>
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<td>IDDC</td>
<td>International Disability and Development Consortium</td>
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<td>MFF</td>
<td>Multiannual Financial Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Development and Co-operation</td>
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<tr>
<td>OHCHR</td>
<td>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Right</td>
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<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical Vocational and Education Training</td>
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1. Introduction

The rights of persons with disabilities are recognised in international human rights treaties and laws, as well as in the current most relevant sustainable development frameworks. The European Union (EU) has been a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) since January 2011, making the CRPD the only international human rights’ convention ratified by the EU as a regional integration organisation. In addition, as of March 2018, every EU member state has also ratified the CRPD. This implies a legally binding obligation for the EU institutions and EU Member States to implement their policies and programmes in line with the CRPD.

The exclusion of persons with disabilities from all spheres of society is seen to be at the core of their increased risk of poverty preventing them from building sustainable livelihood and fully participating in their respective societies. Women and girls with disabilities are even more on the side-lines of society as they face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

The European Union’s implementation of the CRPD is guided by the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, which aims “to empower people with disabilities so that they can enjoy their full rights and benefit fully from participating in society and in the European economy”[1]. The Strategy focuses on eliminating barriers and has identified eight areas for action, one being on external action: ‘Promote the rights of people with disabilities within the EU external action’.

In 2015 the EU was reviewed by the CRPD committee, which noted the lack of a systematic approach to including persons with disabilities in its external policies and programmes. For the next review of the EU by the CRPD committee in 2021, EU will need to report on progress, or how it has addressed the following issues in its international cooperation:

- Adopting a harmonized policy on disability-inclusive development and establishing a systematic approach to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities in all international cooperation policies and programmes,
- Appointing disability focal persons in related institutions,
- Taking the lead in the implementation of a disability-inclusive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Putting in place mechanisms to disaggregate data on disability in order to monitor the rights of persons with disabilities in EU development cooperation,

Interrupting EU funds being used to perpetuate the segregation of persons with disabilities and re-allocating such funding to initiatives aimed at compliance with the CRPD.

Since the CRPD review in 2015, positive progress has been made. In June 2017, the New European Consensus on Development “Our world, our dignity, our future” was adopted[2]. This new Consensus aligns the European Commission's development policy with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and sets a common framework for development cooperation for the EU and its Member States. It brings a real policy shift for the disability movement, as persons with disabilities are explicitly included in the New Consensus with a renewed commitment to implement and monitor the CRPD.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) also provides the global community with an opportunity to work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for all and address the rights and demands of persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls, as a matter of priority. Global organisations of persons with disabilities (DPOs), such as International Disability Alliance and its members, including the European Disability Forum, as well as their allies of the International Disability and Development Consortium were successfully advocating and influencing the 2030 Agenda to include persons with disabilities.

The European Union is currently in the process of defining its new budget, the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), for the period of 2021 – 2027, which will be crucial for the achievement of the European commitments towards the rights of persons with disabilities in development cooperation.

In this context, Bridging the Gap-II has conducted this preliminary study in order to provide further evidence on the EU's contribution to the implementation of the CRPD in international cooperation.

The outcomes of the study should support EU policy-makers and the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) technical staff to develop inclusive policies and improve practical application of such policies, including during the budgeting and programming processes.

Bridging the Gap – disability inclusion in development cooperation

Bridging the Gap is a project funded by the EU under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) Thematic Programme “Global Public Goods and Challenges”. The project consists of two mutually reinforcing components: Bridging the Gap-I and II. Both components of the project work in synergy aiming to contribute to the socio-economic inclusion, equality and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities in low and middle-income countries through more inclusive and accountable institutions and policies.

The project is a thematic response to the requirement to make development cooperation accessible and inclusive of persons with disabilities. This demand is an obligation for both the EU and Member States as parties to the CRPD and can have a significant impact in improving the social inclusion and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. Most EU partner countries have also signed and/or ratified the CRPD, which means they are also required to progressively realise its implementation.

The first component works at the global level and aims to develop indicators and tools to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development in line with the CRPD. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) leads Bridging the Gap-I. The indicators and tools are validated through consultation with experts, UN agencies, civil society, organisations of persons with disabilities, and academia as well as government actors from Ethiopia, Jordan, Moldova, Nepal and Paraguay.

The second component focuses on strengthening the capacities of governments, national human rights institutions and organisations of persons with disabilities in five countries: Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Paraguay and Sudan and to mainstream disability in international cooperation. Bridging the Gap-II supports the development, implementation and monitoring of disability inclusive sector policies and services to implement the SDG in a participatory manner ensuring the compliance to CRPD and the participation of organisations of persons with disabilities[3].

[3] Organisations of persons with disabilities, often known as DPOs, are organisations (and sometimes unofficial groups) comprising a majority of persons with disabilities and their families. They represent the interests and defend the human rights of persons with disabilities through self-representation and advocacy.
Bridging the Gap I

- Develops tools to promote human rights
- Facilitates the inclusive implementation of the SDGs
- Generation of knowledge and training material

Bridging the Gap II

- Support the efforts of five partner countries to develop disability-inclusive public policies
- Knowledge management strategy for disability mainstreaming in development cooperation
A consortium led by the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies (FIIAPP) together with the Spanish Agency for Development Cooperation, the Austrian Development Agency, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, the European Disability Forum and the International Disability and Development Consortium implements Bridging the Gap-II. The OHCHR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland also contribute to the initiative.

For more information about the project and its achievements, please consult the official webpage www.bridgingthegap-project.eu.
**Scope and objectives of the study**

The overall objective of this study is to assess the EU’s contribution to the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities in development cooperation programmes and projects funded by the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Development Fund (EDF) during the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework. It will also test a methodology of assessing disability inclusion in international cooperation that could be used for a wider study at a later stage.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To raise awareness and identify opportunities and recommendations that can support the EU and its Member States, civil society and other actors in meeting their obligations under the CRPD,

- To review key development policies and strategies of the EU and their commitments to implementing the CRPD,

- To review the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in call for proposals in regional programmes (Latin America, African/Caribbean/Pacific and Asia/South Asia) and the thematic programme of Non-State Actors and Civil Society between 2014-2018 in the DCI and the EDF,

- To get a better understanding of opportunities and challenges on mainstreaming disability at EU Delegation implementation level.

Contextualisation will be provided through meeting with implementing partners of a selected number of calls for proposals and discuss with EU Delegation staff in three countries covered by the project Bridging the Gap-II: Ethiopia, Paraguay and Sudan. The European Union and its Member States, civil society organisations and DPOs and other stakeholders can use outcomes and recommendations of the study to better inform the preparation of future EU external action policies and programmes, as well as to influence the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework.
Methodology

The design of the methodology was inspired by previous studies that have looked at disability inclusion in development cooperation[4]. Using the same theory of change as the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation evaluation in 2012, the study understanding change using the Rights Based Approach to development, to which the EU is strongly committed[5]. Achieving sustainable changes according to a Rights Based Approach to development requires:

- Empowering people (rights holders), particularly the most powerless (with hope, confidence, knowledge, skills, tools, communication channels, legal mechanisms etc.) to enable them to improve their lives, organise and claim their rights as stipulated in national laws and UN conventions, and

- Supporting and demanding that those in power (duty-bearers) respect and respond to these legitimate claims (as outlined in the laws and conventions).

In the two previous studies referred to, certain pre-conditions were identified to be key conductors for strengthening disability inclusion in development cooperation. These were adapted to the specific context of EU as a regional actor. Five areas were defined and the study looks to each of these areas using the methods and tools described below, taking into account key principles of the CRPD. An analytical framework was developed to support the identification of key informants and study questions to be answered (Annex 1).

The five areas are:

1. Conducive and inclusive development policies, strategies and plans,

2. Inclusive development cooperation processes and DPO consultation mechanisms at EU headquarters,

3. Inclusive development cooperation implementation processes and DPO consultation mechanisms at EU Delegations,


The methods and tools used to gather evidence and information in the study were both quantitative and qualitative:

- Systematic desk review of the inclusion of persons with disabilities in EU international cooperation policies, DCI and EDF instruments and programming documents of the three countries (Annex 2),

- Analysis of disability inclusion in guidelines for calls for proposals during MFF 2014-2020, using a stop-light method, in the following financing instruments[6]:
  - Geographical funding instruments: Latin America and Asia/South Asia (legal basis DCI) and the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (legal basis EDF),
  - Thematic programme: Civil Society and Non-State Actors (legal basis DCI).

- Key informant interviews (Annex 3):
  - DG-DEVCO headquarter relevant unit and sectors,
  - EU Delegations, grants implementing partners and organisations of persons with disabilities in Ethiopia, Paraguay and Sudan,
  - Organisations of persons with disabilities and IDDC members in Brussels

- Field visit to EU Delegations and Bridging the Gap-II implementing partners in Ethiopia and Paraguay and a remote assessment of EU Delegation and partners in Sudan.

- Analysis of calls for proposals and funded projects at EU Delegation in Ethiopia, Paraguay and Sudan.

[6] Call for proposal for grants were assessed using EuropeAid website with the time frame from 01/01/2014 – 01/11/2018.
Implementation challenges

The scope of this preliminary study did not include the entire set of financial mechanisms across the EU and therefore the results should be interpreted with this limitation in mind. The results and recommendations reflect primarily grants disbursed in the frame of call for proposals. Initially, as part of the methodology it was planned to conduct an online questionnaire administered by DEVCO and EEAS among all EU Delegations, which finally was cancelled due to various delays and difficulties in organizing such survey within the expected timeframe. In a future study, this should be addressed to have a better understanding of the EU Delegations work on disability inclusion, identify potential champions as well as good practice and challenges in order to address the issue in a systematic way.

However, information gathered during the country visits and remote assessment resonates with challenges and findings from the desk review and analysis of the calls for proposals. They also reflect information gathered from key informants at DEVCO and from EU implementing partners, so the study outcomes are confident enough to propose some initial recommendations for the EU to enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in its development cooperation. A larger study, particularly including additional EU Delegations and also budget support financing mechanisms and other financial instruments is recommended to get a better understanding and inform the gaps and challenges identified in this assessment.

Reviewing calls for proposals, Action Documents and corresponding project proposals for disability inclusion is time consuming due to the absence of a marker to identify disability and inclusion and required more time than initially planned. Several project proposals that have been awarded are scanned into DEVCO database, which encumbers quick searches for key words and full documentation has to be read. The recent adoption by OECD of the voluntary policy marker on the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities (hereafter disability inclusion policy marker) should make this easier in a future study.

This study assessed disability inclusion in call for proposals based on a traffic-light system designed specifically for this analysis. Future studies could use the DAC disability inclusion policy marker in grading the level of inclusion, in order to make data and information comparable across different donors.
2. Political will and commitment for disability inclusion

The CRPD has now been implemented for more than a decade. Together with the successful advocacy by the disability movement and its allies, this has undoubtedly had a significant impact on the series of disability inclusive global commitments taken recently: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Agenda for Humanity, the Financing for Development and the New Urban Agenda among other international frameworks, strategies and budget commitments. There is currently a conducive policy environment that needs to be translated into operational strategies that show tangible impact on people’s life. This was further demonstrated during 2018 Global Disability Summit, where a large number of governments, private sector and civil society signed up for a Charter for Change with commitments to implement the CRPD and the SDGs for persons with disabilities[7].

The European Commission’s Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) is responsible for designing European Union international cooperation and development policy and delivering aid throughout the world. DG DEVCO also coordinates with EU External Action service bringing together external relations and diplomacy with international development cooperation. The EU also operates 141 Delegations and Offices around the world. They manage development and cooperation programmes while representing the EU in host countries.

[7] As of May 2019, the European Union has not signed the Charter for Change from the Disability Inclusion Summit.
The European Union has been a State Party to the CRPD since 2011. All EU Member States have equally ratified the CRPD. This demonstrates a political and legal commitment to the implementation of the CRPD and the very first report of the EU to the CRPD Committee in 2015 also indicated a will to advance the implementation of the Convention in International Cooperation. Although the EU Disability Strategy (2010-2020) was defined before the adoption of the CRPD, the strategy has a clearly defined action on External Action that commits to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in all EU’s external actions.

The CRPD Committee recommends that “the European Union adopt a harmonized policy on disability-inclusive development and establish a systematic approach to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities in all European Union international cooperation policies and programmes”

A New EU Consensus for Development was adopted in 2017, to replace the 2006 Consensus, and was a much-wanted advancement as it suggests a real engagement of the EU to the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its international cooperation. The New Consensus aligns the EU’s development policies to the Agenda 2030 and points out that “the EU and its Member States will continue to play a key role in ensuring that no-one is left behind, wherever people live and regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation and gender identity, migration status or other factors. This approach includes addressing the multiple discriminations faced by vulnerable people and marginalised groups”[8]. Moreover, the EU puts a strong emphasis on its international cooperation being framed within a human rights based approach.

In May 2017, the European Commission’s secretariat general created the EU multi-stakeholder platform on SDGs to support and advise the European Commission on the implementation of the SDGs. Unfortunately, no representation of organisations of

persons with disabilities has been included despite an application from European representatives of organisations of persons with disabilities. Including DPOs in this stakeholder platform would reflect the United Nations level stakeholder engagement on the SDGs, which includes persons with disabilities within the major groups system and would and provide better opportunities for mainstreaming disability across EU’s international cooperation work[9].

The Working Party on Development Finance Statistics of the OECD approved the introduction of a voluntary policy marker on the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities (hereafter referred to as the disability inclusion marker) in June 2018 with support of the EU[10]. The marker was added to the Reporting Directives in November 2018. The EU has adopted the disability inclusion marker and already included it in its reporting mechanism, and will disseminate guidance on its use across the finance instruments, grants and budget support as well as other bilateral cooperation mechanisms. Up to the moment of the final draft of this report, not all Member States have adopted the marker.

After the adoption of the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs in 2015, a number of governments and the disability movement launched the Global Action on Disability (GLAD) Network. This is a coordination body of bilateral and multilateral donors and agencies, the private sector and foundations joining forces and coordinating to enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in international development and humanitarian action. The European Commission joined the GLAD network in 2017.

These policy commitments are commendable and provide excellent opportunities to develop a comprehensive and inclusive implementation strategy for the SDGs and the New Consensus. Existing EU result monitoring frameworks does not yet consistently disaggregate data on disability. Following the CRPD Committees recommendations this was suggested as a priority and it will not be possible to report on equality and ensuring everyone is benefitting from EU’s development work, if tools are not put in place to measure this. Today there are well-tested tools to collect and disaggregate data, such as the different tools development by Washington Group on Disability Statistics[11]. Initially this will require investment and capacity development and is an essential next step towards full inclusion.

The CRPD Committee recommends that the European Union “...identif[i]es and put[s] in place mechanisms to disaggregate data on disability in order to monitor the rights of persons with disabilities in European Union development programmes”

Policy implementation mechanisms

The European Union is committed to ensuring a rights-based approach to development cooperation, encompassing all human rights and the Agenda 2030 reinforces such commitments. The European Commission is implementing these commitments as defined in the 2012 EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy 2012[12] and the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019[13]. Both documents make specific reference to the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and non-discrimination on the basis of disability. However, the Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan has not taken a cross-cutting approach to disability inclusion or paid attention to accessibility measures (such as participation in elections or access to justice and information), therefore there is a risk that persons with disabilities are not systematically included across all actions in the Plan. One example is the limited attention to the rights of persons with disabilities in the Tool-box on the Rights Based Approach, a staff working document that was developed in 2014 to operationalize the human rights strategy[14].

The EU Gender Action Plan II that aims at transforming the lives of girls and women through EU External Relations in the period 2016-2020 pays attention to multiple discrimination and intersectional barriers and does address disability as one of them[15].

However, the Gender Action Plan II does not effectively and systematically address the rights of women and girls with disabilities.

The Plan suggests excellent tools to use for gender mainstreaming and concrete examples of successful experiences, however, there are little examples that includes a disability perspective or which address the intersectionality between gender and disability.

The EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child was published in 2017[16]. These guidelines are accompanied by a child rights toolkit on how to mainstream child rights in development cooperation, co-produced by the EU and UNICEF[17]. Both of these documents provide good examples of mainstreaming the rights of children with disabilities.

An updated guidance note for staff on Disability Inclusive Development Cooperation was issued in 2012 to support staff at headquarter and in Delegations to better mainstream disability and support the implementation of the EU Disability Strategy and the CRPD[18]. The limitation of this document though is that it is neither a policy document nor an action plan and therefore has less weight among other human rights guidelines. During this study, only two of the key informants were aware of this document, which indicates that it might yet have limited use.

The CRPD Committee recommends the European Union to “...take the lead in the implementation of disability-inclusive Sustainable Development Goals”.

A more strategic leadership within DEVCO is necessary to enhance and operationalize the policy commitments on disability inclusion. The investments made by the EU on ensuring policy commitments are put in practice could be strengthened and draw from

[17] https://www.unicef.org/eu/crtoolkit/
other donors’ organisational models. For example, the Australian Aid program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and DFID are investing in disability inclusive development and have progressively strengthened both human resources and technical support to bring their commitments forward (Spotlight 1).

Minorities and groups that are excluded and marginalised are not a homogenous group and results of the study of call for proposals and policy document indicates that where persons with disabilities are implicitly included in vulnerable or discriminated groups, or feature across a wide range of vulnerability criteria, they are often excluded in the implementation. For example, the Human Rights Tool Box which is widely rolled-out across both DEVCO headquarters and the EU Delegations mentions only briefly persons with disabilities, as part of the vulnerability criteria, and it does not provide concrete examples, good practice or some practical guidance on how to ensure the participation and inclusion of women, men and children with disabilities.

**Spotlight 1 - DFAT and DFID investing in disability inclusion**

The **Australian Aid program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)** has a section dedicated to ensure the implementation of the second DFAT Disability Strategy (2015-2020). A team of around six persons works in this section. They also have an externally contracted Help Desk providing disability inclusion support to their other departments and Post Offices in partner countries. To ensure that disability inclusion is effectively implemented, a set of two indicators, which have to be reported upon in their Annual Program Performance Reports and Aid Quality Checks, are being tested[19].

An evaluation of DFATs progress on made in strengthening disability inclusion in Australian Aid was made in 2018 and showed several positive developments, for example about 40 % of aid investments and 53 % of aid expenditure are disability inclusive for the two disability criteria[20]. The evaluation also highlighted that the leadership of DFAT has made implementing partners programmes more disability inclusive. Another positive outcome is the empowerment of DPOs, where most programmes reviewed had a capacity building component of DPOs, which had been effective. The evaluation also shows that there is room for improvement, particularly ensuring internal work processes are inclusive across the agency and further capacity building of staff. Disability inclusion could be strengthened in some geographical


[20] Ibid.
programmes, particularly in Africa and Middle East and across sectors such as infrastructure, fishery and water and humanitarian assistance.

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) is also profiling themselves in the field of disability inclusive development. Some commitments were taken with the Disability framework developed in 2014, but the main emphasis on disability inclusion came in 2016, when DFID announced they wanted to become a global leader in this area. Since then more efforts to mainstream disability inclusion across the department have been seen. An evaluation in 2017 of DFID’s work on disability inclusion showed a mixed picture of success and challenges[21]. It highlights a strong leadership on filling much needed research gaps on disability and the introduction of a disability marker of all programmes has pushed departments to consider disability inclusion. On the other hand, the evaluation emphasises the need for comprehensive mainstreaming of disability across the department and capacity development of staff, including more technical expertise, with dedicated start-up funding.

DFID organised, in partnership with the International Disability Alliance, the first global disability summit in July 2018 and later on the same year, launched a Disability Inclusion Strategy (2018-2023). A strategic delivery plan defining key deliverables and related actions accompanies this strategy so that DFID can be held to account. DFID also launched two major funding instruments, which aim to promote disability inclusive development. DFID has today reinforced their team working on disability inclusion and around 11 persons are working to ensure the implementation of the funding instruments and the disability inclusion strategy.

The interviews with key informants at headquarters and at the three EU Delegations and the review of some of the aid implementation mechanisms, suggest that overall, a more strategized and systematic effort towards disability inclusion in work processes and procedures across DEVCO could be made, including in the programming and quality support of thematic units and desks.

To better understand the gaps and needs to build a more systematic mainstreaming of disability in internal work processes, a wider study would be required to strengthen the analysis and trends revealed in this study. However, this study already provides useful elements for the European Union to initiate this process.

Resources and capacity on disability inclusive development

Progress on commitments to the inclusion of persons with disabilities is apparent in European Union development policies, reinforced by the New Consensus on Development and the Agenda 2030, and the commitment to human rights is high on the political agenda. Data gathered during this preliminary study suggest that internal institutional capacity and implementation mechanisms to ensure inclusion could be reinforced. DEVCO as an overall Directorate-General has one focal person on disability that promotes and the inclusion of disability across DEVCO international cooperation work, currently situated within unit B3 Migration and Employment of the thematic Directorate People and Peace. At individual level, there are collaborations between B3 and the Unit B1 Gender Equality, Human Rights and Democratic Governance. Based on the information gathered during the study, the rights of persons with disabilities require more specific attention and resources to be systematically addressed and integrated in the Rights Based Approach. As mentioned earlier, the review of the Human Rights Action Plan, the Toolbox on Human Rights Based approach and the Gender Action Plan II reflects this gap (weakening in the long run the capacity to address the multiple discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities for example). One explanation can lie in the fact that the position responsible for the CRPD implementation and disability mainstreaming in development cooperation is separated at organisational level from the unit in charge of human rights.

There is a good experience in DEVCO on promoting human rights based approach and gender equality as crosscutting themes for which guidelines and capacity tools have been developed. There is also a dedicated unit working on this, supported by additional technical assistance contracted through framework agreements with external experts, to rolling out the Human Rights Based Approach toolbox and for reviewing Action Documents. A range of these experiences can be used to better build disability inclusive internal mechanisms, as there are similar challenges.

Indeed, an evaluation by the EU of the first Gender Action Plan in 2015 highlighted limitations in gender mainstreaming which are similar to what is seen today with disability mainstreaming. Among the challenges identified was that gender had not been sufficiently addressed as a crosscutting issue throughout programmes, projects and country strategies, as well as in government dialogues[22].

This was then better addressed in the Gender Action Plan II, which is a good example of why policy implementation mechanisms require regular reviews or evaluations to ensure accountability to political commitments. CONCORD, the European Confederation of Relief and Development NGOs, conducted a study on the impact of the Gender Action Plan II in 2018 and one of the key finding was the lack of using the Action Plan as a tool for designing and implementing projects as well as interacting on the Plan with external stakeholders[23]. Although there is no direct link here to the issue of disability mainstreaming, it does show some of the difficulties to ensure mainstreaming across internal work processes. The analysis of selected calls for proposals in chapter 3 further indicates some challenges to systematically ensure disability inclusion across the programme cycle.

**The CRPD Committee recommends the European Union to “…appoint disability focal points in related institutions…”**

The progress report of the EU Disability Strategy in 2017 mentions the existence of a network of disability focal points across EU Delegations and that focal points are appointed ad hoc at headquarter level when “needed for consultation of action documents or other initiatives”[24]. Information provided by focal points in DEVCO and EEAS though shows that such network appears not yet to have been formalised at EU Delegation level or at headquarter level. Some focal points on human rights would be contacted if DEVCO or EEAS would need specific support or information on disability often on an ad hoc basis. Among the three EU Delegations included in this study, the Delegation in Paraguay had a designated focal person for disability, however with limited time available to work systematically on disability inclusion. The main responsibility to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are mainstreamed in EU development cooperation relies on one-person function with few resources to promote a systemic change across units, desks, and delegations. There is a disability focal point in the European External Action Service (EEAS) in the division of Human Rights Strategy and Policy Implementation and coordination is maintained between the two focal points at headquarter levels.

Across DEVCO Units B1 and B3 there are regular exchanges in coordinating inputs into policy documents, evaluations, programming or thematic capacity but individual collaboration cannot compensate the lack of structural processes aiming at including the rights of persons with disabilities in the core work done on human rights and gender equality.

The EU has invested over time in raising awareness and capacity among its staff to better implement disability inclusive development. In 2012, a first two-day training was organised by DEVCO in cooperation with International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC), followed by a one-day training in 2014 at headquarter level. Staff from both EU Delegations and headquarters was invited to participate, remaining a relatively limited reach. In 2016, after the adoption of the new Gender Action Plan and the Agenda 2030, DEVCO Units B1 and B3 decided to equip staff with skills on how to include gender, child rights and the rights of persons with disabilities more focused on programme identification, formulation and monitoring, developing 2,5-day training curricula. This training was organised annually up to 2018 when there was a decision to again reorient the training. Instead of comprehensive training on gender, children and disability, a general training on the Human Rights Based Approach, where both gender and disability should be included, will be implemented. While this could be a logical approach, there is a risk that disability becomes more of a checklist issue, included across vulnerability criteria, which so far has proven unsuccessful in other European Union development cooperation processes.
3. Inclusion of persons with disabilities in calls for proposals

With the aim of better understanding to what extent the rights of persons with disabilities are included in the financial instruments of EU's development aid, this preliminary study selected four programmes within two of the funding instruments, DCI and EDF, during the 2014-2020 Multi Financial Framework period.

A search for disability and related concepts and terminology[25] in the Multiannual Indicative Regional Programmes for Latin America and Asia (2014-2020) shows that none of them refer to the rights of persons with disabilities[26]. Furthermore, the Cotonou agreement, which is the legal base for the EDF and support to African/Caribbean/Pacific countries, which was designed in 2000 did not address disability in its non-discrimination article, and neither did the amendments and revisions up to 2010. However, in 2011, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly adopted a resolution on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in developing countries, urging the Member States of the ACP and the EU to adopt various measures to promote their rights[27].

The Multiannual Indicative Programme for CSO-LA 2014-2020 programme refers to persons with disabilities both in the context of describing the challenges of the most marginalised populations and by including disability as one of several cross-cutting issues that should be mainstreamed. Reiterating this challenge already mentioned by addressing a range of crosscutting issues under a mainstreaming paragraph appears to rather dilute the importance of each and every issue. Without disentangling different implications of crosscutting issues mentioned, which range from systemic and legal issues (such as human rights, democracy, and good governance) to rights of specific groups of society (such as children, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities) and thematic areas (such as environmental sustainability including climate change and mitigation), there is a risk of it becoming a shopping list. The analysis of specific calls presented below gives an indication that this approach to mainstreaming disability is not effective.

The study included calls for proposals published from January 2014 until November 2018. All calls that were not within MFF 2014-2020 were discarded.

[25] The search in the guidelines and log frame for the calls for proposals included the words disability/handicap/pwd/inclusion/accessibility and its equivalent in French, Portuguese and Spanish.
[26] Multiannual Indicative Programme documents are the basis for developing Action Documents and call for proposals.
The calls for proposal analysis included grants in the:

- Geographical Programme for Latin America, Africa/Caribbean/Pacific and Asia/South Asia, and

- Civil Society Organisations – Local Authorities programme (CSO-LA) as a thematic programme.

A simple assessment grid using a traffic light rating was developed, which allowed for a quick analysis of key areas where persons with disabilities should be referenced and included in the application guidelines in order for a grant to ensure inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities.

**Table 1 - Assessment grid calls for proposals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **RED** | - No reference to disability in the context analysis, stakeholder analysis, cross-cutting issues, non-discrimination, target group, logical framework indicators.  
- Disability is only mentioned in the evaluation grid as added-value element together with other vulnerability criteria. |
| **ORANGE** | - Reference to disability in stakeholder analysis, as crosscutting issue and/or in non-discrimination section.  
- Added value element in evaluation grid.  
- Women, men and children are not referenced in the target group. |
| **GREEN** | - Persons with disabilities and their rights are mainstreamed across all relevant aspects of the call (Context analysis, non-discrimination sections, cross-cutting issues, vulnerability criteria, and defined in target group).  
- Not referenced in logical framework. |

Out of the 295 calls for proposals analysed, 67% were in red level, 21% were in orange level and 12% were considered to be inclusive of persons with disabilities, in green level. It is also important to highlight that only one of the calls analysed suggested including disaggregation of data on disability and none of the calls referred to accessibility or inclusion.
The selected funding programmes only represent a minor portion of EU’s overall aid budget and a more comprehensive analysis should be undertaken to see if these trends are manifest in other funding instruments and programmes, such as the EIDHR, European Neighbourhood Policy, budget support mechanisms, blending instruments and other bilateral agreements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional programmes</th>
<th>RED</th>
<th>ORANGE</th>
<th>GREEN</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African, Caribbean and Pacific</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia and South Asia</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic programme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO-LA</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL %</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 - Analysis of calls for proposals
Spotlight 2 - Ensuring disability inclusion throughout the project cycle

All EU calls for proposals for grants, service tenders, or works, as well as budget support are designed using a common process of formulating an Action Document. The template and instructions for designing an Action Document (which can be done by headquarters or EU Delegations) were revised in 2018, so most of the calls analysed in this study are based on the previous version. The previous version of the Action Document had specific instructions to assess crosscutting issues such as gender, HRBA and environment and climate change. The HRBA instructions made specific reference to analyse persons with disabilities’ opportunities to participation and equal access to services and referred to the Guidance Note for staff on disability inclusive development cooperation.

In the revised version, used since January 2019, there is no reference to persons with disabilities in the checklist of mainstreaming issues and persons with disabilities are not included in the mainstreaming section in the instruction to the Action Document. However, a reference to persons with disabilities is made under the general principle of leaving no one behind, with a footnote referring to the CRPD. Concerns were expressed by several informants from DEVCO about the new Action Document templates as well as the changes in the review system, as there will be fewer opportunities to feedback on these issues. It will be important to follow-up on how changes to this Action Document will influence the inclusion of persons with disabilities in future calls for proposals and other financing agreements.
4. European Union Delegations

Most of the EU delegations are situated in developing countries. They represent EU interests, including through their section on development cooperation. To better understand the way that rights of persons with disabilities are addressed in the implementation of EU development aid, this study includes as a case study three EU Delegations of the countries covered within the project Bridging the Gap-II. The three countries represent a protracted conflict country (Sudan), least developed country (Ethiopia) and upper middle-income country (Paraguay).

Capacity and resources on disability inclusion

There is no strategic decision at DEVCO to have designated focal points on disability at EU Delegation level, though there have been attempts to create a network of staff interested in the topic. The appointment of Gender Focal points is considered by most informants to have been an important driver of the gender equality issue and could be taken as a good practice to extend to building up capacity on disability inclusion. There are also human rights and democracy focal points in all delegations since 2016, as established in the Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan. Among the three EU Delegations included in this study, the Delegation in Paraguay is the only one that had a designated focal person for disability.

Information gathered from interviews with staff in the three EU Delegations indicates a commitment towards disability inclusion and recognition of the CRPD being a guiding document. Feedback from staff and implementing partners, supported by the review of projects granted by calls for proposal presents similar challenges around the practical application of disability inclusion at various stages of the project cycle management. The main difficulties highlighted appear to be linked to a lack of systematic processes and mechanism that ensures that persons with disabilities are included across the key steps of the project cycle. Competing priorities and a need for more practical knowledge or good practice examples on disability inclusion was raised as main reasons for disability being so far dealt more in an ad hoc way, and primarily in sectors of human rights and social development.

While the study interviewed a limited number of Delegation staff, it is important to mention that they reported not to have participated in training on the rights of persons with disabilities or disability inclusive development. Several had done the HRBA training at delegation level, for example in Sudan and Ethiopia but could not give specific
examples of how the rights of persons with disabilities were reflected in the training[28]. The availability of a focal point on disability at DEVCO headquarters was not widely known.

Several staff welcomed training and more support through having access to practical tools and examples of good practice to improve disability inclusion in their work but were also concerned about the increasing burden of reporting. All staff interviewed pointed out that they have limited time for capacity building in general and that training or other capacity building initiative should be delivered at country level or regional level. Some reluctance was felt towards adding new guidelines or action plans, and people preferred capacity building and some practical checklists.

Tools on data collection on persons with disabilities and the promotion of for example the Washington Group questions or the inclusion of indicators in logical framework were limited. Some staff were hesitant to request disability indicators or disaggregation of data in calls for proposals due to the absence of statistics and baseline in the countries. There were a few examples where disability had been considered as a crosscutting theme in calls for proposals or other funding mechanisms, for example the Technical Vocational and Education Training (TVET) programme in Sudan funded by the EU Trust Fund for (Spotlight 4).

[28] It shall be noticed that in 2018, Bridging the Gap-II was invited to facilitate a disability sensitization session at the EU Delegation in Ethiopia within a wider training on human rights-based approach to programme and project management.
Inclusion of persons with disabilities in calls for proposals

In all three countries, a selection of granted proposals was analysed and in the large majority, persons with disabilities were not identified or referenced, nor included as a discriminated group. Some calls referred to persons with disabilities as part of the vulnerable groups of the population. Only rarely were there indicators or means to measure the impact of the projects on women, men and children with disabilities.

Feedback from EU Delegation staff about this lack of disability inclusion in proposals ranged from stating that the actual call did not target persons with disabilities to not being confident in the best way to include disability in calls and evaluation of proposals. There was also reluctancy towards adding indicators, or demanding disaggregated data on disability, particularly knowing that it would be difficult for implementing organisations to gather baseline data. A few good examples were identified and illustrate, that while inclusion does require resources and capacity, it is also relatively easy to get started (refer to country reports and spotlight 3, 4 and 5).

Spotlight 3 - Ethiopia Civil Society Fund progress on disability inclusion

Ethiopia Civil Society Fund II was developed under the EDF 10 but several projects were implemented starting from 2015. The third phase of the fund, under EDF 11 was only getting started at end of 2018, wherefore this study looked just at the previous Civil Society Fund II.

The Action Document for the Civil Society Fund II from 2009 specifically highlighted that “Vulnerable groups, such as children, disabled and elderly are under-represented in the Ethiopian NSA sector. Therefore, the project will try to encourage their participation”. The consecutive call for proposals for Civil Society Fund II in 2012 did not entirely reflect this and the 2015 call for large grants did not specifically address disability inclusion, even if persons with disabilities were mentioned under Lot 2. The Civil Society Fund II awarded proposals that were submitted by DPOs but on the other hand among the 40 projects funded, six were disability inclusive, two were to some extent inclusive while 32 proposals did not mention persons with disabilities. This analysis gives an indication of the challenges of grouping several marginalised groups and themes under a ‘vulnerability criteria’ as it seems that it does not ensure a systematic inclusion of persons with disabilities.
In the build-up for the Civil Society Fund III, there has been a positive shift towards improving the inclusion of persons with disabilities. The Action Document approved in 2017 has a systematic referencing to persons with disabilities: from the stakeholder analysis and lessons learned section to cross-cutting issues and is explicitly mentioned in the results section. Moreover, the intervention logic highlights that persons with disabilities’ right and entitlements should be promoted. And the most encouraging is that the logical framework for the action requests disaggregation of data on disability. Presuming that the call for proposals guidelines will be equally inclusive, the Civil Society Fund III could be a champion call for the EU to learn and showcase on in the coming years.

Empowerment of persons with disabilities

Interviews with DPOs during the study in the three countries show a mixed picture about their participation and involvement in the EU development cooperation at delegation level. The EU Delegations usually invite network organisations or larger NGOs for consultations ahead of calls for proposals and when preparing their country plans, being representative of a larger number of civil society organisations. In many countries, for example in Paraguay and Sudan, DPOs are still struggling to become members of these coalitions and networks and they are sometimes not formalised into a national structure. In such situations the diverse representation of persons with disabilities is a challenge, and there is a risk that women with disabilities or people with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities are not represented.
In Sudan, some DPOs had established a relationship with the EU Delegation and had been invited to information sessions on calls for proposals and the delegation in Ethiopia regularly invites DPOs. A handful of them had also been granted funds. At the same time, in both Sudan and Paraguay, some concerns were raised about the consultation mechanisms, as some of them did not feel represented by the DPOs invited for the consultations. In Paraguay, the DPOs interviewed had the impression that mainly large NGOs were consulted and stressed that these NGOs are not fully representing the voice of persons with disabilities. Overall there were indications of a wish to better understand how EU Delegations organise consultations.

The African Disability Forum further echoed these challenges and highlighted that while it was positive that DPOs were asked by other civil society organisation to participate in projects, it was sometimes felt as tokenistic and they had no means to influence the overall action.

Across the DPOs interviewed in the three countries, a positive image of the EU as a committed donor to disability inclusion came forward, however with suggestions to better mainstream disability across their financing mechanisms. All DPOs interviewed for this study and several of EU’s implementing partners (see next chapter), recommended that the EU should request disability indicators and disaggregated data from their implementing partners and enforcement mechanisms in the calls for proposals. As a concrete suggestion, DPOs and NGOs requested that a percentage of the beneficiaries should be women, men and children with disabilities, that the logical framework should make it obligatory to provide disaggregated data on disability, and that consultation has to be made with DPOs during needs assessment and the design of the project proposals.

Another difficulty expressed by a few DPOs was the challenges to access EU funds, including the use of the electronic application system. Their main challenges were not to have sufficient capacities to put together the required resources.

Other more internal issues that were highlighted, particularly in Sudan and Paraguay, was the lack of capacity and resources among DPOs to building a representative and effective organisational structure. This means that many small DPOs may not be equipped to apply for EU funds; but more importantly, a lack of resources can also lead to ineffective advocacy and divisions within the movement.

Four DPOs interviewed during the study were granted projects with EU funds. In Sudan, one DPO that was successful in obtaining a grant said they had applied several times and step-by-step learnt how to improve their application.
Another two DPOs submitted in partnership a project to the Civil Society Fund II in Ethiopia and were successful. Whereas they could participate in coordination meetings with other grantees and could benefit from sharing of experiences and capacity development on project management, they also suggested that such meetings could include training on disability inclusion. They further suggested to the EU to make sure that the Technical Assistance Units contracted to manage and support these large grants should include an obligation to incorporate capacity building, not only on project management, but on raising awareness and exchange on specific development themes, such as gender equality, indigenous population and persons with disabilities.
Accessibility policies

Without doing a formal accessibility audit of the three EU Delegations, questions were asked about accessibility and observations could be made during the field visits in Ethiopia and Paraguay. The EU Delegation in Paraguay is newly constructed and accessibility was considered so persons with mobility difficulties can visit and enter the premises. Some improvements could be made to the access and orientation for blind persons. Sudan and Ethiopia delegations are not physically accessible at the moment based on information from staff interviewed.

Providing information in Braille, audio format or ensuring sign language in public events or meetings was not systematic, which will impede equal access to consultation meetings or information about events and grants.

None of the delegations had a policy or plan on improving accessibility, however there was a strong acknowledgment of this being an important and urgent issue that should be taken up by the leadership. Staff strongly acknowledged that as EU Delegations they should show their commitment to operate in line with the CRPD and be accountable. The lack of accessibility in the delegations was also raised during interviews with organisations of persons with disabilities. Some mentioned difficulties to access information provided for the call for proposals or not being able to access civil society consultations. In this aspect, Sudan delegation has made efforts of reaching out to more DPOs (and also other civil society) by organising some consultations online.
5. Opportunities and challenges – making EU grants more inclusive

In order to get an appreciation of EU’s implementing partners’ commitments and approaches to including persons with disabilities in their organisations’ policies and projects, 12 organisations that had received EU funds were interviewed[29]. Keeping in mind that these organisations only represents a minor number of organisations receiving EU grants, the study aimed primarily to look for trends among the organisations and provides examples of the challenges and opportunities faced.

What was common among the implementing partners was that majority did not have any policy or strategy on disability and had rarely been requested or incentivised by EU to take disability into account. Where organisations did include persons with disabilities and had a clear approach to improving their work processes it came from internal processes or headquarters directives (such as Plan International Paraguay) or because of existing inclusive approaches to diversity, such as the Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos in Paraguay.

As an interesting example and potential good practice, the German Development Agency, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), implements various TVET programmes funded by the EU Trust Fund in Sudan. The EU delegation proactively encouraged the inclusion of persons with disabilities, both by clearly highlighting this in the guidance for the funding and in the discussions and exchanges with GIZ in the project inception phases (spotlight 4).

### Spotlight 4 - EU supporting disability inclusive TVET in collaboration with GIZ in Sudan

GIZ is implementing a BMZ commissioned programme on improving employment opportunities in Sudan, with a particular focus on TVET. The project is titled ‘Vocational Training and Food Security for Refugees and Host Communities in Eastern Sudan’ and was in 2017 reinforced with a grant contribution from the EU Trust Fund via the EU Delegation in Sudan.

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[29] Seven partners in Paraguay, three in Ethiopia and two in Sudan. In addition, some public entities were also interviewed, such as SENADIS in Paraguay, and the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Resources in Ethiopia.
The programme has three main components:

1. Vocational training and introducing new certified training products and curricula in coordination with the Supreme Council on Vocational Training and Apprenticeship that better respond to the specific context.

2. Private sector development through working with different business organisations and unions to connect companies and enterprises with vocational training centre.

3. Employment promotion through supporting and reinforcing employment centres management by Department of Labour. It also includes organising job fairs to match job seekers and enterprises.

During the discussion between GIZ and the EU Delegation in Sudan for the design of the action, the inclusion of persons with disabilities was strongly encouraged by the EU Delegation. GIZ was positive to look at how their programme could become more inclusive and succeeded in integrating a few persons with disabilities in the first graduation of vocational trainees. When analysing the barriers to the low number included, they identified a few key areas where they could improve, such as better targeting of information to persons with disabilities using other channels, looking how to adapt training courses or identifying additional skills development that would better suit the needs of persons with disabilities and continue to develop closer partnerships with DPOs. So far collaboration has been established with the Women with Disabilities Association.

GIZ is currently involved in five other programmes supporting employment and vocational training and has created a working group that will exchange on experiences. In addition, a wider working group with other agencies involved in employment creation and TVET in Sudan is set-up and in both these groups, GIZ plans to bring in exchanges around disability inclusion.
Disability inclusion among EU’s implementing partners

In terms of data and evidence on persons with disabilities most implementing partners could not give information on the impact their projects have on women, men, girls and boys with disabilities. Most did not have mechanisms in place to disaggregate information on beneficiaries, or other project outcomes, on disability and they had so far not been recommended or obliged to do so in the implementation of projects funded by the EU. They could provide data if the projects had a concrete objective on disability. Several organisations mentioned that they did not have the capacity or knowledge on how to mainstream disability or felt that persons with disabilities were not really their target population, or that they did not have sufficient budget to provide the extra activities needed to reach persons with disabilities.

There were some examples where implementing organisations had developed partnerships with DPOs, or organisations working specifically on disability, with positive outcomes such as building capacity and raising awareness of their staff on the rights of persons with disabilities. In a few cases, the partnership was more in the framework of a sub-contract of the DPOs to implement specific actions concerning persons with disabilities.

Spotlight 5 - Fundación Paraguaya’s journey towards disability inclusion

Fundación Paraguaya is an NGO in Paraguay that works on poverty elimination through supporting schools to be self-sustainable and build capacity of families to get out of poverty. Five years ago, the organisation realised that they did not reach all marginalised groups and that particularly persons with disabilities did not access their programmes. Step by step they adapted their Poverty Stoplight, a tool that allows families to be protagonists of their own stories of elimination of poverty, to be accessible to persons with disabilities[30]. In addition to empowering people, the data collected through the Poverty Stoplight has proven to be useful for communities, organisations, companies, projects and governments. By testing ways to adapt their microcredit programmes and simplifying some procedures they now have regular applications also from persons with disabilities. They also trained what they call ‘impulsores’ that were responsible to raise awareness among their own offices and

those involved in providing microcredits, on how to ensure inclusion. Internally, Fundación Paraguaya has also put in place specific targets for each office to encourage them to reach and include more persons with disabilities.

Most of the implementing partners met during this study acknowledged that civil society could do better to include and ensure participation of persons with disabilities. Several organisations suggested that the EU could provide more information and share good practice on disability inclusive development. Majority of the partners had participated in training sessions on project cycle management and budget management and they proposed having training on diversity and inclusion, with exchanges on concrete examples of good practice. Several organisations also suggested that the EU should reinforce disability inclusion in its call for proposals and make it obligatory for receiving funding. There were also recommendations coming from DPOs and partners that any funding from the EU, being a signatory to the CRPD, should require that a percentage of the target population of any grant should be persons with disabilities.
6. Opportunities to deliver on commitments

The results of this study, while being limited in scale and coverage, suggested various ways that the EU could strengthen its commitment on implementing the CRPD and ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities in its international development cooperation. Improvement has been made in terms of policy commitments but a number of the CRPD Committee recommendations to Article 32 require more efforts and investment. One of the most challenging finding is the lack of mechanisms that can actually measure and provide evidence that the EU funds used in development cooperation contribute to ensuring persons with disabilities are not left behind. Today, there are no obligations tied to the aid in measuring the progress on the inclusion of persons with disabilities. While the newly adopted voluntary OECD DAC Disability Inclusion marker is an important step in the right direction, more can be done to strengthen systems, mechanisms and staff capacity on disability inclusion.

The trends uncovered in analysing the funding programmes in the instruments of EDF and DCI suggest a gap in mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities in grants, and there are indications that the implementation of some projects might actually excludes persons with disabilities.

A mentioned in the methodology, a wider assessment of EU development cooperation mechanisms would provide a more detailed picture and understanding of disability inclusion, however, the study’s outcomes can already provide EU with information and evidence to initiate steps to improve disability inclusion. In the build-up to the next EU budget, provisions related to the draft Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument must be further strengthened to ensure that no European funds are invested externally in creating or exacerbating barriers and segregation of persons with disabilities.

There is today a favourable environment for disability inclusion in international development cooperation. High level commitments to leaving no one behind have been made during summits and forums, EU Member States development agencies are developing specific policies to do better on inclusion, NGOs are increasingly showing commitments to include persons with disabilities, and organisations of persons with disabilities are better organised to hold their governments to account on their commitments to the CRPD. The European Union has also shown important commitments, such as joining the GLAD Network to coordinate with other donors and agencies to enhance inclusion of persons with disabilities in development cooperation and humanitarian aid and produced a bold and disability inclusive New Consensus on
Development. Furthermore, DG ECHO has recently released a guidance note on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations[31].

The European Union as a leading donor worldwide has the possibility to be at the forefront in the implementation of the Agenda 2030. It can step up its efforts to stand by its commitments and principles in the New EU Consensus of Development of “playing a key role in ensuring no-one is left behind” and ensure that all financial mechanisms of the new MFF are aligned with the principles of an inclusive sustainable development.

The CRPD Committee recommends that the EU institutions and Member States share the commitment to take into account the specific needs of persons with disabilities in their development cooperation and take stronger measures to ensure their full inclusion in society and their equal participation in the labour market.

7. Priority areas for action

The suggested action areas have been prioritised based on the study outcomes, reinforced by suggestions of EU staff, implementing partners, DPOs, civil society and other key informants, and can support the EU to build a road map or strategy for meeting its obligations to implement the CRPD in line with the recommendations provided by the CRPD Committee.

Short-term actions

1. Provisions related to the draft Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument should be further strengthened to ensure that no European funds in the upcoming MFF are invested externally in creating or exacerbating barriers and segregation of persons with disabilities.

2. The European Union can step up in the field of gathering evidence on inclusion of persons with disabilities. Well-tested data collection tools are available, such as the Washington Group Questions, which can be used to start gathering evidence and reporting on the SDGs. DEVCO results monitoring should continue to encourage and propose ways to start disaggregating data on disability and measure disability inclusion. The widening of the scope of this study is also recommended to get a more complete picture of disability inclusion across EU external action.

3. The OECD DAC disability policy marker should be fully implemented, including across the Member States and in particular, the 2012 staff guidance note should be updated to disseminate guidance on the new marker.

4. All EU institutions, including EU Delegations should be fully accessible to persons with disabilities or define an accessibility plan to become so. Inclusive and accessible consultation mechanisms with all civil society groups, including DPOs, can be put in place. Organisations of persons with disabilities should have equal access to organisational capacity building grants that promote the strengthening of civil society.

5. Identify “Champion EU Delegations”. The acknowledgement and commitments expressed by the EU delegations to increase their capacity and systematic approach to disability inclusion can be harnessed by making visible good practice of EU Delegations.
**Longer-term actions**

6. *DG-DEVCO can strengthen its global leadership on disability-inclusive development* by assigning this responsibility to a Directors level. Disability inclusive strategies and plans for implementing the SDGs have to be developed and disability inclusion ensured.

7. *The development of a post-2020 EU disability strategy should maintain the external action as one priority area. To ensure the implementation, a disability-inclusion action plan could be developed.* This action plan should have a set of measurable goals and indicators with adequate resources for implementation. The development of the strategy and action plan should be made in close consultation with other EU Member States, organisations of persons with disabilities and wider civil society.

8. *Investment should be made in strengthening the technical capacity on disability inclusion across DEVCO units and desks,* particularly by reinforcing B1 so that efficient mainstreaming on human rights of all groups can be ensured across DEVCO work processes and procedures. One concrete action could be to replicate the gender helpdesk and create a disability inclusion helpdesk. A network of disability focal points should be formed.

9. *Existing action plans on gender equality and human rights should be revised to well reflect disability-inclusion,* in close consultation with organisations of persons with disabilities and wider civil society.

10. *Improve the inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities and inclusion in EU capacity development programmes.* Ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities is included across existing thematic and sectoral training and capacity development programmes, while providing specific capacity development on disability inclusion, including at EU Delegations. DEVCO should work closely with international and national organisations of persons with disabilities and other disability inclusion focused NGOs around capacity development.
Bibliography


European Commission. Tool-box: A Rights-Based Approach, encompassing all human rights, for EU development cooperation. 2014.


## Annex 1 - Analytical framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preconditions to be ensured or created</th>
<th>Conducive and Inclusive Policies and plan</th>
<th>Inclusive Development Cooperation mechanisms at EU HQ level</th>
<th>EU Delegation implementation mechanisms</th>
<th>Learning and capacity development on implementation of the CRPD</th>
<th>Feedback system is inclusive of persons with disabilities</th>
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<td>EU Development Policies and Strategies</td>
<td>DCI and EDF budget instruments</td>
<td>Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIP) Action Documents Call for proposals Contracts and monitoring</td>
<td>Training programmes Capacity4Dev Sharing of good practice</td>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation Data disaggregation within SDG monitoring</td>
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### Inclusion and political will

**Tools:**
- Systematic analysis of key policies
- Systematic scanning of DCI and EDF call for proposals
- Interview with DEVCO leadership

Persons with disabilities are adequately and systematically included in development policies, strategies and plans. There is political commitment to inclusion.

Persons with disabilities are adequately and systematically included in development strategies and plans and implementation mechanisms. Existence and role of disability focal persons.

Persons with disabilities are adequately and systematically included in MIPs. EU Delegations are accessible. Consultation mechanisms with civil society are inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities.


Data disaggregation is inclusive of disability.

### Participation and partnership

**Tools:**
- Interview with DPO representatives at EU and country levels
- Interviews with IDDC members

Mechanisms of consultation with civil society for policy and strategy development.

Consultation with DPOs at EU level – mechanisms in place. Accessibility criteria built in procurement, infrastructure, information, political participation.

Partnership with DPOs (type, frequency, representation) Consultation mechanisms with civil society at EUD level. Accessibility of consultation mechanisms.

DEVCO works in partnership with DPOs for capacity building on disability mainstreaming and the disability inclusive development.

Involvement of DPOs in monitoring and evaluations.
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<thead>
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<th>at EU and country level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Interview with DEVCO Disability and Gender focal points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interview with EEAS disability focal point</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Gender

**Tools:**
- Systematic analysis of policies and plans
- Interview with Gender focal persons in DEVCO and EU Delegation
- Semi-structured questionnaires include gender specific questions

| EU development policies and plans are addressing empowerment of rights holders (including women, men and children with disabilities) | Support to civil society is inclusive of building capacity of DPOs Programmes for public service improvement is inclusive of disability Budget support in key sectors is inclusive of disability (education, employment, infrastructure, health, etc.) Funding is not used to perpetuate segregation of persons with disabilities | Capacity building and learning on the implementation is inclusive of DPOs representation and persons with disabilities are systematically considered as rights holders (and not in a charitable way) | Data disaggregation on disability demonstrates empowerment of persons with disabilities (increasing access to education, livelihood and access to other services) Indicators are used to demonstrate increased capacities of DPOs as part of strengthened civil society | Gender inequalities are reflected in outcomes |

### Empowerment

**Tools:**
- Screening of programmes and projects contracts and proposals at country level (Ethiopia and Paraguay)
- Interviews with DPOs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one’s own choices, and independence</th>
<th>EU policies and plans are not discriminating against persons with disabilities or contradict the dignity and freedom of choice and independence (e.g. does not promote segregation in education or living arrangements, support services, respect legal capacity etc.)</th>
<th>Intentional or unintentional barriers or actions contradicting principles of CRPD? (e.g. progression towards inclusive education is the norm and funds are not used to finance segregated education or residential care)</th>
<th>Intentional or unintentional barriers or actions contradicting principles of CRPD? Progression towards inclusive education is the norm and funds are not used to finance segregated education or residential care</th>
<th>EU’s evaluations, monitoring shows improved equality of women, men and children with disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tools: - Screening of programmes and projects contracts and proposals at country level - Systematic analysis of policies and plans - Interviews with DPOs at EU and country level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


## Annex 2 - Review of EU policies and strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of document</th>
<th>Disability inclusive</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU Consensus for Development (2006-2016)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Only one reference to disability linked to combat exclusion and discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New EU Consensus for Development (2017)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Make specific reference to persons with disabilities to which EU should pay specific attention and vigorously promote and protect their rights. There is also reference to persons with disabilities in the principles of leaving no one behind, and a specific paragraph (31) mentioning their challenges as a marginalized group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020</td>
<td>Can be reinforced</td>
<td>Disability is mentioned as a aggravating discrimination when it intersects with gender. There is no mentioning to women or girls with disabilities in the proposed actions or indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019) “Keeping human rights at the heart of the EU agenda”</td>
<td>Yes, but can be reinforced</td>
<td>EU’s obligation to the CRPD as a signatory party is mentioned. Rights of persons with disabilities are also specifically described under the non-discrimination point. Persons with disabilities should be included also in other areas of action, such as gender actions, human rights defenders and role of DPOs in the CSO movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROM – Handbook Results Oriented Monitoring</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>There is no reference to persons with disabilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| HRBA Toolbox A Rights based Approach, encompassing all human rights for EU Development Cooperation 2014 | Does make reference but can be reinforced | Reference to persons with disabilities is made twice throughout the toolbox.  
1. CRPD as a core HR instrument.  
2. Disability mentioned among a range of marginalized groups under third working principles of non-discrimination and access:  
“... All persons are entitled to equal access without discrimination of any kind on the basis of race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, language, religion or other opinion, origin, disability, birth or other status to public services, opportunities, justice and security...” |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Title</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child (2016)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The rights of children with disabilities cut across the whole document and it encourages EU and its partners to disaggregate data on children with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Indicative Programme for thematic programme CSO-LA 2014-2020</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The document makes several references to persons with disabilities, including as a cross-cutting issue and in the main objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-indicative Programme Latin America 2014-2020</td>
<td>Yes, but can be reinforced</td>
<td>The document refers to disability in the challenges described and is included as a crosscutting issue to be mainstreamed (among several other issues)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Indicative Programme Asia/South Asia 2014-2020</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>There is no reference to disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotonou Agreement (2010) and its revised versions and amendments</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>There is no reference to disability. A resolution on the rights of persons with disabilities was adopted by EU and ACP member states in 2011 with recommendations to promote the rights of persons with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiannual Indicative Programme 2014-2020 Paraguay</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>There is no reference to disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Indicative Plan Ethiopia 2014-2020</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Persons with disabilities only referenced in Health intervention as being more vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Term Strategy 2016/17 for the implementation of a special support measure in favour of the people of the Republic of Sudan</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 3 List of key informants

European Commission
DG DEVCO Unit B3. Migration, Employment
DG DEVCO Unit B1. Gender equality, Human rights and Democratic governance
DG DEVCO Unit 04. – Evaluation and Results
DG DEVCO Unit D2. Eastern Africa, Horn of Africa
DG DEVCO International Aid Cooperation EU Emergency Trust Fund
DG DEVCO Unit G1. Latin America and Caribbean
DG Employment Unit C3. Disability and Inclusion
European External Action Service. DMD Global 1. Human Rights

International Civil Society Organisations
CBM
EU Cord network
Humanity & Inclusion
IDDC
Light for the World

Regional organisations of persons with disabilities
African Disability Forum
European Disability Forum

ETHIOPIA
EU Delegation
Development and Cooperation section
Project managers

EU implementing partners
World Bank Ethiopia
Gender and Social Development Taskforce for PSNP, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Resources
Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) for Ethiopia-EU Civil Society Fund II
Network of the Visually Impaired and the Blind
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
Small Irrigation Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Resources
Rural Job Creation and Food Security Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Resources

Organisations of persons with disabilities and EU implementing partners
Network of the Visually Impaired and the Blind
Ethiopian National Disability Action Network
PARAGUAY
EU Delegation
Development and Cooperation section
Project Managers

EU implementing partners and DPOs
Agencia Española de Cooperación al Desarrollo (Bridging the Gap-II implementing agency)
Fundación Paraguaya
Secretaría Nacional por los Derechos Humanos de las Personas con Discapacidad (SENADIS)
Plan International Paraguay
Semillas por la democracia
Paragual y Yakaruedas (DPO)
Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura
Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)
Fundación Alda
Asociación Santa Lucia (member of Comisión Nacional de Discapacidad - CONADIS)
Fundación Saraki
Fundación Teleton (DPO)

SUDAN
EU Delegation
Development and Cooperation section
Project managers

EU implementing partners
GIZ Vocational training and food security
GIZ Vocational training and employment initiative Darfur
UN Industrial Development organisation (UNIDO)
Italian Agency for Development Cooperation – Khartoum office (Bridging the Gap-II implementing agency)

Discussion group with DPOs
Sudanese National Union for the Deaf vice Secretary and the Women Department secretary
Sudanese Union for Physical Disability
Physical disability challenges Organisation
Sudanese Autism Organisation
Intellectual Disability Union state of Khartoum
Technical consultant NCPD
Khartoum University Graduates with Disability association and
Sudanese National Union for the Blind