



LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère des Affaires étrangères
et européennes

Direction de la coopération
au développement et
de l'action humanitaire

Evaluation of the emergency.lu project

In 2016, the Directorate of Development Cooperation and humanitarian action of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs commissioned an independent evaluation of emergency.lu. The evaluation was conducted by ARTEMIS Information Management S.A. The Ministry publishes below a summary of the main results of this exercise.

Observations, assessments and recommendations expressed in this document represent the views of the evaluators and do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To meet communication needs in the context of a humanitarian crisis, an emergency crisis following a natural disaster and a complex and prolonged humanitarian crisis, the **emergency.lu (e.lu)** solution was developed with the support of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA), based on the specific and complementary areas of expertise of three Luxembourg private partners: SES TechCom, HITEC Luxembourg and Luxembourg Air Ambulance (LAA). The idea initially was to provide a pre-configured satellite communications solution, which would be the most rapidly operational on site, improving the coordination and efficiency of relief measures.

At mid-term of the second phase of the project, the MFEA mandated ARTEMIS Information Management SA to carry out the evaluation “of the project and the use of resources within the scope of the agreement between the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and *National Satellite Communications Framework* (NSCF) – emergency.lu – in order to strengthen the public-private partnership (PPP) and performance of the project“. The evaluation work involved one dimension: “evaluation of the project”, based on the 8 OECD-DAC evaluation criteria (the 5 traditional evaluation criteria and three criteria specific to the evaluation of humanitarian actions - coverage, coherence and coordination), and a second dimension: “analysis of the organisation and the partnership”. The analysis was completed by a comparative analysis with platforms of the same type, and an experience-sharing workshop. ARTEMIS set up a team of 6 people¹. The approach was participatory.

This Executive Summary is a condensed version of the most important information from the evaluation report. It presents the principal results of the work, an overall vision of the achievements of e.lu, the key evaluation conclusions, the broad axes of recommendations and good practices.

■ Results of the evaluation

Quality of the partnership: The e.lu project benefits from good relations developed within the PPP and good cooperation between the current project managers. Accounting for the respective interests of the private actors, a situation of mutual trust has been established. To improve the overall quality of the project, the partners need better visibility of their respective achievements, the results expected and achieved, the justification of the resources and the difficulties faced by each partner. They also expect an improvement of the performance of the solution and its components, and receiving explanations about the decisions made and a clarification of the objectives, priorities and strategy for the “project”.

The governance of the PPP is closely linked to the governance of the project. The e.lu steering committee meetings regularly bring the four PPP members and their Luxembourg operational partners together. The role of NSCF project manager has partially unburdened the MFEA of the role of coordinating the private partners and reporting on the progress of their activities, but has not yet fully met the expectations of the MFEA, which wants to have a single contact. For the external network, e.lu is surrounded by four circles of technical, logistics, operational and beneficiary partners. Some of these could be better integrated or better positioned than they are today.

Performance of the management system: The human resources deployed are not yet fully aligned to the project management requirements. In the decision-making chain, a link is missing between the MFEA coordinator and the cooperation management team. Visibility on the resources allocated to certain activities is also still insufficient.

¹ Three key experts: Virginie Kremer, project manager and expert evaluator of the project, Marc Roure, expert evaluator of the organisation and functioning of the partnership (PPP) and Peter Fischer, expert in satellite telecommunications. They received support for technical and quality assurance aspects from Sandrine Beaujean, contractual and administrative support from Virginie Attivissimo and technical support with the creation/automated operation of the on-line questionnaire from Mario Colantonio.



The financial management is prudent. Certain provisional costs aren't comprehensively costed. Furthermore, robust identification and formulation phases would be needed to justify the reallocation of budgets to activities other than those initially foreseen, since the agreement provides for both this budgetary flexibility and the return of unused budgets.


In terms of organisation and the management system, the project documentation is still not sufficiently formalised and structured. The reference framework of the project management is the specifications of the initial contract and amendments. Project planning is based on a payment schedule rather than a schedule of execution defining specific deliverables. The project quality management system has not been formally defined or implemented, particularly in terms of quality assurance and risk prevention. Lastly, the monitoring and evaluation of the project is not based on a logical framework or on the definition of a set of steering and results indicators, covering the project's key areas of activity and complementing the existing indicators.


Balance of the PPP: The PPP is still not perceived by each of the partners as completely balanced. The extension of the execution and non-quality correction deadlines is covered financially by the MFEA, with certain exceptions. The MFEA's room for manoeuvre is also restricted by contractual and commercial logics intrinsic to the PPP.


External perception: Luxembourg is characterised as a committed, flexible, reliable and predictable partner. However, outside stakeholders are lacking a long-term vision of e.lu and information about the financial value of its contribution to United Nations operations.

Achievements at the time of the evaluation: The project formulation phase has not resulted in a clear definition of the results expected of the project, which limits an analysis of its effectiveness. That said, a number of objectives have been achieved or are in the process of being so. The main results and findings at the time of the evaluation confirm that e.lu is a key link in the communication chain in humanitarian crises. E.lu is an *end-to-end*, 24/7 and innovative solution, more in terms of its organisation than its technological content. It is one of the principal solutions mobilised by the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC).

DAC/OECD criteria:

 The e.lu solution is highly **relevant**: it is coherent with the humanitarian aid strategies and the international commitments and meets a clearly identified need in humanitarian crises of different kinds. The few variances noted concern the insufficient adequacy to the real needs for certain software developed, and the fact that certain digital tools developed within the framework of the project are not used to support the preparation of the volunteers. Furthermore, given the project purpose, certain objectives and the question of the 12-hour standby service are no longer consistent with the reality of the project in phase 2.

 **The effectiveness** of the e.lu solution is quite good, despite the strategic adjustments and clarifications of objectives that are now necessary. At this level, the PPP has improved effectiveness, with a greater capacity for reaction of the technical partners when faced with problems, availability and professional procedures. The implementation of the NSCF project manager role has contributed to improving the effectiveness of the project. Areas for improvement have arisen in terms of maintenance, training, use and management of equipment, development of services and capitalisation of experiences on the field within the PPP.

 While on the one hand, the PPP appears to enable the MFEA to access preferential rates, and while it is confirmed that the budget is managed prudently, the **efficiency** of the project is nonetheless limited by various elements: the budget management methods, the identification and formulation phases, which can be insufficient for certain activities, and the actual under-utilisation of LAA in the project in view of maintenance and standby costs, allowing them to remain available and ready for activation within 12 hours.



- Short- to medium-term **effects** are clearly identified on the ground. By establishing a broad and stable communications system, the solution enables humanitarian actors to work better.
- The characteristics of the e.lu solution as an emergency intervention system make it difficult to envisage being taken over by the local beneficiary authorities. However at present, the elements favouring its **sustainability** are a secured six-year contract and a capacity of use of the solution which extends beyond Luxembourg, thanks to the knowledge shared between Luxembourg and its partners. At present, e.lu does not participate directly in strengthening local capacities to enable countries to face and prepare for disasters. There has still been no risk analysis to predict certain situations which might adversely affect the solution.
- The **coverage** is wide, and is intended to facilitate relief work for large population groups suffering, regardless of where they are. E.lu does not currently connect directly with the population affected, but rather with the humanitarian organisations who provide it with vital humanitarian aid. The Luxembourg e.lu personnel are not deployed beyond certain safety criteria, but e.lu still finds a way of allowing for a deployment. A number of areas of extension have been raised to align better with the ongoing strategic developments.
- All the actors involved directly and indirectly in e.lu work with the same objective in mind. There are no conflicting policies. This is favoured highly by an intervention in close collaboration with the ETC, as well as with the European civil protection networks. The presence of e.lu on the international humanitarian aid stage allows the project actors to align with the humanitarian mechanisms and understand the developments and directions. All this engenders a high level of **coherence**.
- Being a privileged partner acting under the auspices of the ETC, a high level of **coordination** of the action is guaranteed. Furthermore, the close relations with the civil protection bodies of other European countries allow for the coordination and mutualisation of the relief work. On the ground, a high level of integration of the different communications solutions deployed is ensured.

■ **Conclusions and recommendations**

E.lu is a “project” which raises numerous exceptions, both in terms of the MFEA and the private partners. Faced with these exceptions, the first contractual phase has been a phase of adaptation. During phase 2, the partners are continuously improving operating mode within the PPP and dealing with the difficulties. The experience-sharing workshop organised within the scope of the evaluation has allowed us to take a positive step in this direction.

E.lu is a unique solution, most of all in terms of its organisation. It is an effective solution which meets most of the prerequisites expected of a communications solution in a context of crisis.

In strategic terms, faced with an international humanitarian context in constant evolution, certain initial premises must now be reviewed and the medium-term strategic objectives clarified accordingly. The main change noted concerns the speed of the response. The reality was quickly established and the place of e.lu is now clearer. The first to arrive on the field after a disaster require truly portable simple solutions. E.lu offers the humanitarian community a stable and efficient communications infrastructure in terms of capacity and coverage. The solution is deployed essentially under the auspices of the ETC, the reaction time of which does not favour an immediate deployment. Its added value concerns the transition between the immediate intervention phase following a disaster and the lasting restoration of the local means of communication. This requires both organisational and partner-based adjustments, as well as a clarification of what is really being proposed to the humanitarian community, eliminating any ambiguity relating to the positioning demonstrated.

Either way, the e.lu solution is coming out of a “running-in” period and entering a period of maturity. It is important to consolidate and stabilise the solution and the developments it has



engendered, and thus find a better balance between this stabilisation and the pursuit of research and development.

Nineteen recommendations have been made in the evaluation report, structured on the basis of their priority and the actors responsible for their implementation. They are grouped into five main themes: the e.lu strategy, the management of the “project”, the management of the budget, the partnership network and the technical solution. Six of these nineteen recommendations have been defined as priorities. These are:

- To clarify the purpose and strategic objectives of e.lu and clearly define the broad outlines of the project.
- To adjust the resources to the project management needs.
- To better structure the decision-making process.
- To define a monitoring and evaluation framework.
- To strengthen collaboration with the European Civil Protection Network (ERCC) to improve the European response capability.
- To find a balance between continuous improvement and permanent developments so as to stabilise and consolidate the solution as a priority.

■ **Good practices**

The MFEA is a member of the Cluster ETC, which confers upon e.lu an institutional representation which lends the solution developed within a PPP weight, credibility and pertinence.

The high level of integration of the various training actions proposed at the cluster and civil protection organisation levels allows for interchangeable teams to be deployed, who are able to work together to install the different communications systems. This favours the optimisation of training time and intervention on the field.

To deploy civil protection volunteers with IT skills for the first two weeks, which allows the teams to manage the stress of the crisis situation and install the equipment efficiently. Furthermore, having the possibility of deploying PPP internal personnel represents added value in terms of both the efficiency of the deployment and the feedback and development of the solution.