Enabel

Executive Summary

Evaluation Report on the Projects for Supporting the Operationalization of the Police in Benin and Crisis Management

PAOP/PAOP CRI

Navision Codes :

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BEN 19012 (PAOP-CRI)

Benin

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1 Overview of the evaluation

The **Project to Support the Operationalisation of the Republican Police** (PAOP) and the **Project to Support the Operationalisation of the Republican Police, Crisis Management Component** (PAOP-CRI) **aim** to support the efforts of the Beninese government in maintaining security, operationalising, and modernising the Republican Police. More specifically, the PAOP-CRI aims to create operational synergies in the event of a security crisis (between civil protection, emergency medical services-SAMU, firefighters, local authorities at various levels, police, and military). The **expected outcomes of the PAOP** include the implementation of community policing on a national scale, combating cybercrime, strengthening human resource management, and the professionalisation of administration and external communication. For the **PAOP-CRI**, the **targeted outcomes** include the operationalisation of monitoring, prevention, and crisis management by the Republican Police, the establishment of crisis prevention and management centres, the development of crisis plans, and the improvement of the investigative capacities of the Judicial Police.

The **main objective** of the evaluation is to ensure Enabel's accountability to partner countries, donors, and other stakeholders by examining the implementation approaches and results achieved. It focuses on improving four key areas for the second phase of the projects: community policing, crisis management, cybercrime, and human resource management. Twelve specific evaluation questions have been defined to guide this process. They cover a range of areas, from the effectiveness of the operationalisation of community policing to the integration of decent work principles and a rights-based approach. Additionally, it addresses gender issues and the unintended effects of the project's actions.

The primary users of the evaluation are the police officers in the units impacted by the PAOP and PAOP-CRI projects. Among them are the General Directorate of the Republican Police and its various divisions, the National Agency for Civil Protection, intervention and territorial units, and several other entities such as the SAMU and firefighters.

The evaluation covers the activities of the Republican Police in the pilot areas impacted by the two projects within a limited scope including **Cotonou**, **Tchaourou, and Parakou** during the period from **1st September 2020 to 28 November 2023**, for the PAOP, and **from 10 November 2020 to 17 December 2023**, for the PAOP-CRI.

The **evaluation methodology** began with a comprehensive review of reports produced by the projects to gain a thorough understanding of their context. Subsequently, a field mission was conducted in Benin, involving meetings in Cotonou, Tchaourou, and Parakou with various stakeholders, including the Enabel team and local representatives. This meeting schedule, initially developed by the Enabel Benin project team, was revised by the evaluators to accommodate the availability of the stakeholders.

During the mission, the evaluators conducted nearly **50 interviews**, including with female police officers and representatives of civil society, and facilitated six focus groups in various locations. Initial findings were shared to gather feedback, which was then incorporated into the interim report. Information sources included Enabel reports, which were highly regarded for their quality and analysis.

Despite encountering some limitations, such as low participation from civil society in Cotonou and challenges in meeting with individuals initially involved in the projects, the sampling focused on the relevance and representativeness of the stakeholders. This deliberate selection process included police officials, departmental and municipal authorities responsible for crisis management, local elected officials, emergency medical services, and civil society organizations, taking into account their roles, impact, and gender considerations.

2 Findings and conclusions

2.1 Observations by OECD-DAC criteria

Relevance	A	The PAOP and PAOP-CRI projects have effectively addressed Benin's political priorities regarding Community Policing, enjoying strong political support and aligning with the Government's Action Program (2021-2026). They have promoted closer ties between the population and the police, which is essential for enhancing trust and the effectiveness of security interventions. These projects have also sparked keen interest among beneficiaries, both police officers and citizens, by tackling crucial themes and adapting to local realities, involving various stakeholders in their implementation, notably within crisis management frameworks.
Coherence	A	The project team sought to establish synergies with other Enabel initiatives and development partners, notably by contributing to the "Safe Cities" concept and conducting local security diagnostics appreciated by local authorities. They supported the development of the Ministry of Interior and Public Security's internal SYGESTAS project, facilitating the collection of statistical data on crime in Benin. Effective collaboration was established with Enabel's P@SRIS project for addressing gender-based violence (GBV) victims by the police. Despite attempts to synergize with other projects like PASPort, these remained limited. Regular meetings were initiated with other Technical and Financial Partners to promote coordination and information exchange.
Effectiveness - PAOP	A	The PAOP project has been effective in several areas, yielding tangible results: cooperation with the Belgian Federal Police, establishment of a centre for gender-based violence (GBV) victims, development of a community policing manual, training of police officers, sensitization of partners, acquisition of security equipment, and deployment of radio coverage. Community policing is now well assimilated, human resource management is strengthened, cybercrime is better tackled, and administration as well as external communication are professionalized.
Effectiveness – PAOP-CRI	B	Despite the implementation of appropriate mechanisms and devices, the PAOP-CRI project has not yet been sufficiently tested, and the actors are not yet fully strengthened in their capacities. The Republican Police (PR) now has a monitoring and prevention mechanism with the Crisis Prevention and Management Centre (CPGC), but its effectiveness during a major crisis remains to be tested. The provided training has improved the readiness of the Republican Police (PR) to handle a crisis and enhanced its coordination with other actors, but challenges persist, particularly in terms of centralizing crisis management and intervention capacities beyond Cotonou. The handling of victims has not seen significant changes during crises, although improvements have been observed in the care of women victims of GBV in priority areas. The investigative capacities of the Judicial Police services are strengthened at the central level but remain insufficient at the departmental level.
Efficiency	B	The initial project design presented shortcomings by under-sizing the team, resulting in workload overload and increased mobility within project management. Despite the discontinuation of technical meetings of the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, rigorous monitoring and evaluation are ensured by the Enabel team, with elaborated capitalization tools for the replication of methodologies. Challenges were encountered in public procurement processing due to administrative burdens and vertical hierarchical decision-making, delaying certain activities such as the establishment of the call centre for the General Directorate of the Republican Police (DGPR). Issues with inadequate supplies were also reported, contributing to a significant financial surplus, notably due to the late start of the project and the non-completion of the DGPR call centre.
Sustainability	B	Despite the stakeholders' willingness to maintain the momentum of the PAOP and PAOP-CRI projects, sustainability challenges arise. The community policing doctrine is beginning to take root, but staff mobility risks compromising the achievements. Additionally, the lack of consideration for equipment maintenance costs and the

		need for human resources and skills for PR monitoring and evaluation could affect the projects' sustainability.
Impact	A	The PAOP/PAOP-CRI projects have strengthened the building of the Republican Police and facilitated the merger between the Gendarmerie and the National Police. Support for the Human Resources Directorate has improved task efficiency and police engagement. The image of the police has improved, fostering trust-based relationships with the populations. Government initiatives have also contributed to this transformation. Police officers feel more legitimate and committed, while interactions between the police and the population enhance human security. Elected officials have become aware of their role in civil security, and crisis management actors are better prepared for their responsibilities in the event of a major crisis.

2.2 Findings by specific evaluation question

Q1 (appropriation – community policing component): To what extent has the PRIOR model been effectively embraced by the Republican Police and integrated into its operations?

The PRIOR model has been optimally embraced by the Republican Police and supported by training, methodologies, and andragogical tools tailored to the Beninese context. Additionally, it has a cohort of trainers and strong prospects for effective replication in other areas.

Q2 (impact - community policing component): To what extent does the (re)definition of the core functionalities of community policing, as implemented in the operationalization of the PRIOR model, contribute to providing better service by the police to the population?

he PAOP has improved the functioning of the Republican Police by implementing initiatives such as providing benches for users in waiting areas and conducting sector visits to interact with the population. Relations between the police and the population have improved, with a notable decrease in fear of the uniform and less confrontational interactions. The functionality principles of police stations are publicly displayed, serving to evaluate police work and enhance transparency. The PRIOR model (Partnership, Problem-solving, Responsible involvement, External orientation, Accountability) is widely promoted and expected by users in pilot areas. However, the evaluation was conducted in a tense context due to a national road safety campaign that caused tensions between the police and the population. Despite these challenges, the PAOP and PAOP-CRI projects have had a positive impact on the Republican Police, but improvements are still needed.

Q3 (efficacy - community policing component): To what extent have the supports provided to the Republican Police (training, establishment of a database, digitalization, recruitment, etc.) improved daily management, planning capacity, and the implementation of the community policing model?

Human Resources Management is gradually being digitalized with efficiency, but given the heavy legacy in terms of HR, progress is slow. For example, there's simplification and automation of administrative document management, but there's still work to be done regarding advancements, through the acquisition of additional computer resources, management of annual leave entitlements, and training.

Q4 (efficacy - crisis management): To what extent have the mechanisms for crisis management, as well as community policing officers, acquired the ability to handle crisis management in the project's targeted areas? Are there any skills within the community police that still require further reinforcement?

The crisis management mechanisms are well-suited to the needs. A Crisis Prevention and Management Centre (CPGC) is established and activated as a tool for crisis management and prevention at the DGPR level. Training and capacity-building actions have been conducted for the benefit of actors who are more familiar with and understand the challenges of effective crisis management in all departments.

However, the project was unable to establish a call centre or conduct full-scale simulations, and the entire set of provisions has not yet been tested by a major crisis to draw lessons learned, especially regarding coordination.

Q5 (efficacy): To what extent have the projects integrated principles related to decent work, specifically regarding working conditions (well-being) of targeted groups? What have been the strengths to continue in the next phase? What could be improved in the next phase?

In the targeted areas, the project has focused on ensuring decent work for police officers, particularly in terms of renovating workplaces (police stations in Cotonou and Tchaourou, central Parakou, and districts 1, 2, 3), constructing a police station in Tchatchou, providing motor vehicles and motorcycles, computer and office equipment, internet connection, and air conditioning. However, there are still some initiatives to be launched to improve the working environment: managing annual leave entitlements, acquiring office equipment according to government standards, strengthening electrical power supply, etc.

Q6 (efficacy - cybercrime component): Among all the actions undertaken in the fight against cybercrime, which ones have proven particularly effective and would be relevant to consider in the next phase of actions? Which ones are not or less conclusive?

Enabel's technical support through computer equipment and digital data extraction software has been crucial in professionalizing the police force and improving service efficiency. The ease, speed, and precision of searches have reduced improvisation, errors in targeting, and ensured the protection of rights in special and complex investigations. To be continued: the strengthening of regional branches of the OCRC in Porto-Novo, Abomey, Parakou through advanced computer equipment, vehicles, training, and appropriate infrastructure to enhance their autonomy and effectiveness, as well as awareness campaigns for prevention.

Q7 (relevance/efficiency): What is the level of effectiveness and utility of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems implemented for the two projects? Have these systems allowed for the assessment of beneficiary satisfaction as well as progress and achievement of results?

The PAOP/PAOP-CRI project has a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer who produces detailed annual reports and develops knowledge-sharing tools in collaboration with the communications team. However, tracking indicators is hindered by the lack of data from the DGPR and indicators that are too vague to analyse changes effectively. Communication between the DGPR and beneficiaries is facilitated through interactive tools such as the Facebook page and website, but perception surveys are infrequent. Beneficiaries can also use a toll-free number to report police behaviours.

Q8 (successes and failures): What are the success and failure factors to consider in subsequent phases of the projects to ensure that the operationalization of community policing in Benin, crisis management, and cybercrime combat actions can be impactful and address the challenges?

Success factors: strong commitment from police hierarchy, methodologies and learning mechanisms, appropriation of the community policing concept, participation of populations, inclusion of stakeholders involved in crisis management, and willingness to acquire expertise.

Failure factors: apart from external factors (Covid-19, insecurity) negatively impacting the projects, resulting in a loss of approximately 12 months at the beginning, attention should be paid for phase II to:

- Quickly schedule activities, equipment acquisitions, and adhere to specifications common to the Beninese administration (printers, cartridges, consumables, etc.).
- Review tender processing procedures to reduce delays.
- Ensure the financial strength of bidders (call centre market of the CPGC).
- Establish a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) mechanism within the DGPR.
- Strengthen regional branches of the OCRC and establish one for the southwest, known for cybercrime and counterfeiting.
- Reactivate the project for training the Police canine brigade.

Q9 (complementarity): What lessons can be learned regarding the complementarity, synergy, and combined efficiency of actions funded by Belgium and the European Union in the police sector in Benin? What recommendations can be made to strengthen these aspects in future phases?

The PAOP/PAOP-CRI project collaborated with international partners, notably engaging in discussions and meetings with projects such as DigiBoost and EQUITE, funded respectively by the European Union and the French Development Agency. Synergies with these two projects resulted in concrete collaborations, such as using communication tools developed by these projects and establishing a centre for victims of gender-based violence with EQUITE. Working in synergy with other projects can add value to a project but is very time-consuming as each project operates at its own pace. Additionally, it often relies on the quality of relationships between project leaders, making this synergy fragile, as when one party leaves their position, there is often no follow-up. Moreover, within the framework of the PAOP, these synergies were often punctual and lacked follow-up. Recommendations: identify complementary projects that can truly add value to the project; designate a dedicated person for this relationship outside of the project manager, even though it remains the project manager's responsibility for strategic follow-up; ensure continuity in this complementarity to produce effects throughout the process.

Q10 (integration of rights-based approach): To what extent has the rights-based approach been integrated into the two evaluated projects?

In the two evaluated projects, the human rights-based approach has been fully integrated, particularly in intervention areas such as Cotonou, Tchaourou, and Parakou. Dedicated training for police officers and improvements in police infrastructure have contributed to better respect for citizens' rights, including those in violation. Commissioners ensure adherence to these principles, notably by informing detainees of their rights, even though some do not request a lawyer. Regular checks are conducted to verify compliance with detention deadlines and the treatment of detainees, and monitoring mechanisms involving NGOs, the prosecutor, the director of investigations, and even the presidency are in place. However, challenges persist, particularly in terms of equipping detention cells and adhering to legal detention deadlines, despite improvements brought about by the renovation and construction of new police stations.

Q11 (Gender integration): Did the project propose innovative approaches to promote the inclusion of women among national or local security personnel (police or military defence)?

The project did not propose innovative approaches to promote the inclusion of women in the police force, where they represent only 4.4% of the workforce. Although targeted recruitment campaigns were organized and some women assumed leadership positions, biases persist, and most women are confined to administrative tasks. The project's initiatives maintained a gender sensitivity, but challenges remain, particularly in terms of work organization and cultural perception. Efforts to strengthen women's inclusion, such as supporting an association for victims of gender-based violence, have had limited impact on the ground. For example, the sole specialist in technical and scientific police work in Parakou is a woman, but she faces challenges in terms of equipment and professional recognition. In conclusion, while actions have been taken, a more proactive and context-specific approach to policing and Benin would have been beneficial in promoting women's inclusion more significantly.

Q12 (Gender integration): What avenues should be explored in the second phase, beyond the awareness raised, to improve existing gender imbalances within the police force?

Positive discrimination in favour of women in recruitment, as has been done in the past, could improve existing gender imbalances within the police force.

Additionally, continuing recruitment and communication campaigns targeting women may encourage more women to join the force. However, this should be accompanied by improvements in working conditions for police officers, which should indirectly promote better inclusion of women.

Given the current workload of police officers, due to staff shortages and ongoing reforms, it is difficult for women to integrate into units that necessarily must consider issues related to pregnancy and maternity, thus reducing women's ability to undertake as many missions as men. This is perceived as unfair by men who prefer not to work with women.

3 Recommendations

R1: Strengthen the digitalization and cybersecurity of the Republican Police (PAOP)

Recommendation	Associated conclusion	Targeted stakeholders	Level	Priority	Type
As part of the digitization of many police tasks, initiate a reflection on the security of police information systems, particularly by centralizing all cyber initiatives at the DSIC level, for better action coherence.	6	Enabel, MISP, DGPR, DISC	Level 1	Medium-Term	Strategic

R2: Restore the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (PAOP/PAOP-CRI)

Recommendation	Associated conclusion	Targeted stakeholders	Level	Priority	Type
Restore the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee established at the start of Phase 1 of the PAOP-PAOP-CRI project, to support the establishment of an M&E mechanism within the DGPR. This would allow for better project ownership, tracking of distributed equipment, balancing needs across different units, anticipating maintenance, and establishing annual budgets accordingly for the sustainability of these assets. Additionally, enhance horizontal linkages (indicators) and results frameworks.	7	MEL Enabel, DERCCT, DGPR, DAFL	Level 1	Short-term	Operational

R3: Strengthen the project's anchoring at the MISP (PAOP/PAOP-CRI)

Recommendation	Associated conclusion	Targeted stakeholders	Level	Priority	Type
Enhance the project's integration at the MISP by creating a continuous channel of information between the projects and the MISP, which will soon incorporate the GNSP, crisis management actors. The CPGC could serve as a perfect catalyst between the DGPR and the Ministry.	4	Enabel, MISP, DGPR, GNSP, SYGESTAS,	Level 1	Short-term	Strategic

R4: Strengthen the management of rehabilitation and construction programs in favour of the Republican Police (PAOP)

Recommendation	Associated conclusion	Targeted stakeholders	Level	Priority	Type
- Initiate the planned rehabilitation and construction projects at the beginning of phase II. - Consider rehabilitation and construction projects that place greater emphasis on the use of renewable energies (such as solar) to enable police stations to operate without electrical connections.	10	Enabel, DGPR, Equipe infrastructure de la DGPR	Level 1	Long-term	Operational

R5: Reactivate Local Security Committees (LSCs) or other forms of citizen participation

Recommendation	Associated conclusion	Targeted stakeholders	Level	Priority	Type
Re-activate Local Security Committees (LSCs) or other forms of citizen participation that align with the same philosophy as community policing. These forums bring together representatives from the police, elected officials, women, and youth in a structured manner. They are proven governance tools for security that have worked elsewhere. This would help strengthen relations among all security stakeholders.	8	Enabel, DGPR, ANPC, locally elected officials, DDPR	Level 1	Medium-term	Operational

R6: Train local elected officials in security and crisis management (PAOP/PAOP-CRI)

Recommendation	Associated conclusion	Targeted stakeholders	Level	Priority	Type
Train local elected officials on their expected role as the primary responsible for the security of their constituents, as well as to better prevent and manage crises.	8	Enabel, DGPR, ANPC, locally elected officials, DDPP	Level 1	Medium-term	Operational

R7: Enhance the visibility of the European Union within the framework of the PAOP-CRI

Recommendation	Associated conclusion	Targeted stakeholders	Level	Priority	Type
Enhance the EU's image in communication efforts, particularly among beneficiaries of EU funding as a financial partner in the PAOP-CRI project. This could involve co-chairing the COPIL and/or having a more prominent presence in documents produced as part of the projects.	**5**	Enabel, UE, project communication	Level 2 or 3	Short-term	Strategic

R8: Ensure the interoperability of emergency numbers

Recommendation	Associated conclusion	Targeted stakeholders	Level	Priority	Type
Organise the interoperability of emergency numbers, enabling the seamless transition from one number to another depending on the emergency being reported, to mitigate confusion among both emergency services and the public.	**1**	Enabel, UE, project communication	Level 2 or 3	Short-term	Operational

R9: Initiate a reflection on the mobility of personnel associated with the PAOP/PAOP-CRI projects

Recommendation	Associated conclusion	Targeted stakeholders	Level	Priority	Type
Initiate a discussion with the DGPR so that personnel trained in specific areas (communication, transmission, crisis management, etc.) can remain in their roles for a few additional months or even longer, allowing them to apply their training for the benefit of their department and to train other colleagues who could take over their responsibilities. Alternatively, conduct a more thorough screening with the HR department of the DGPR beforehand to select personnel who are less likely to be transferred in the weeks following their training.	**11**	Enabel, DGPR, DRH	Level 2 or 3	Short-term	Strategic

R10: Develop new approaches to promote better inclusion of women within the Republican Police (PAOP)

Recommendation	Associated conclusion	Targeted stakeholders	Level	Priority	Type
Identify gender focal points in all units, among both women and men, who could be trained in positive masculinity and could, on one hand, better integrate women within the units and encourage their colleagues to recognize the need to work with more women, by placing more trust in them. Improve positive discrimination in favour of women in recruitment. Continue recruitment and communication campaigns targeting women to encourage them to join this profession. However, this should be accompanied by improvements in working conditions for police officers, which should indirectly promote better inclusion of women.	**9**	Enabel, DGPR, DRH, Gender focal points within the DGPR and/or the MISP	Level 2 or 3	Short-term	Strategic

4 Lessons learned

LL1: Utilize the police's social skills to promote broad inclusion of all stakeholders in the project

At all stages of the PAOP project, Enabel involved representatives from civil society, students, and traders, who were considered full-fledged actors in the project. Initially, this approach was not well understood by the police, but it was essential to the Community Policing doctrine, aiming to bring the police closer to the population and involve them in the co-production of security. To achieve this, the project team leveraged the police's skills to raise awareness among the population and initiate dialogue through numerous meetings in Cotonou, Tchaourou, and Parakou, supported by the project's communication unit and the DGPR. This approach strengthened the ties between the police and the population, allowing them to take ownership of the project and establish direct contact with the police for advice or information.

LL2: Training supported by communication is the key to driving change within institutions such as the Republican Police

The initial results achieved by the PAOP and PAOP-CRI projects are remarkable given the limited time. Although the change in police doctrine began before the project, it accelerated the movement through police training and effective communication. This combination facilitated better adoption of the doctrine by both police officers and the population. Regular and tailored communication reached all targets, improving the image of the police and involving them as agents of change. The provision of equipment, improved working conditions, and training further reinforced these changes, restoring pride to the police force and assigning them new roles within the community.

LL3: Valuing national expertise ensures better ownership and sustainability of projects

The project manager sought to strengthen his team for two projects, initially by recruiting young international experts, but his request was denied for administrative reasons. He then opted for young national experts, who seized this opportunity to gain experience and contribute their skills. This practice, repeated throughout the project, was highly appreciated by Beninese police officers. Additionally, the project often relied on the internal expertise of the Republican Police, which promoted the development of internal experts' skills and ensured better project ownership. However, this practice requires significant investment from these internal experts without any other form of encouragement or motivation.

LL4: The inclusion of women within the Republican Police cannot be decreed; it must be part of a process of evaluating human resources management within the Republican Police

Despite the project's efforts to promote the inclusion of women in the Republican Police, the number of women remains very low (4.4%), and they are often confined to secretarial positions. Recruitment campaigns and promotions have not been sufficient to attract women to a profession perceived as difficult, and men are reluctant to welcome them into their units, believing that it increases their workload. The limited progress exceeds the project's capabilities because the inclusion of women requires broader cultural change and a human resources management policy within the Republican Police that integrates this dimension.