



Evaluation of impact and effectiveness of counter- and alternative campaigns stemming from the CSEP programme aiming at preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism

Final Report

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Evaluation of impact and effectiveness of counter- and alternative campaigns stemming from the CSEP programme aiming at preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism

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Abstract

This evaluation, conducted by Ramboll Management Consulting and Kantar Public, provides the European Commission, DG HOME, with an analytically robust evaluation of impact and effectiveness of counter- and alternative campaigns stemming from the CSEP programme aiming at preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism. The evaluation covered all 20 CSEP projects beginning from the 2017 call for applications, including the 2018 call, up to the end of 2021. The geographical scope covered the same scope as adopted in each of the analysed campaigns.

At the project level, the CSEP-funded projects contributed to building capacity within CSOs through delivering several training and empowerment activities to counteract terrorist and extremist content online. Despite this, evidence of tangible results and impact on target audiences through the online communication campaigns was found to be lacking. Indeed, while most projects had a clear vision of their campaign during the design stage, funded projects encountered difficulties in actually implementing them and then reporting on the impact of dissuading people vulnerable to extremist content online. This was further exacerbated through there being a gap between the level of ambition of the CSEP at the programme level and what individual-funded projects could possibly achieve. Insufficient monitoring and evaluation within the projects also made it difficult to discern clear impacts on the prevention of radicalisation.

Executive summary

Objectives and scope of the evaluation

This report presents the evaluation of impact and effectiveness of counter- and alternative campaigns stemming from the [Civil Society Empowerment Programme](#) (CSEP) aiming at preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism¹ for the European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs. The purpose of the evaluation is to perform an analysis of the communications campaigns implemented by the projects within the CSEP and draw conclusions and lessons learned, based on six evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, EU-added value and sustainability².

The evaluation assessed the design and implementation of the individual communication campaigns that were funded by CSEP, as well as their impact on the target audiences (mainly those on the verge of radicalisation). The study covered all 20 CSEP-funded projects from the 2017 and 2018 calls for applications, up to the end of 2021. The geographical scope covers the same scope as that adopted in each of the analysed campaigns.

Overview of the methodology

The evaluation had both a formative and a summative element, in that it was interested in both the process (“how”/ “why”) and impact (“what”) of the campaigns funded by CSEP. The aim of the evaluation was two-fold. Firstly, the summative element of the study assessed to what extent the campaigns funded by CSEP attained their objectives during the period 2017-2021. Secondly, the formative element of the study provided lessons learned for the implementation and design of the campaigns going forward as well as identifying the most successful projects to establish benchmarks for the next CSEP cycle. Final lessons learned were made on the basis of aggregated findings.

The evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach combining a qualitative and quantitative focus. To gather this data, the following activities were undertaken:

- **An in-depth desk-based review** and a thorough assessment (including over 180 questions) of all 20 projects funded by the CSEP as part of a scorecard analysis exercise.
- **A consultation approach** which ensured that the views of all relevant stakeholders were considered, primarily through EU level and project level interviews to gather more in-depth information on the impact of the communication activities of the Programme. In total 10 EU level and 71 project level interviews were conducted.
- **A post-testing of project campaigns** which investigated the extent to which the communication assets (e.g. videos, images, songs, video games) produced by the CSEP project teams were effective in engaging their target audiences in the context of preventing radicalisation. In total 50 participants were involved in online communities and 1,500 participants responded to the survey as part of the post-test assessment.

Evidence from each of these activities provided an evidence-based assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, EU added value and sustainability of the Programme. The evaluation findings fed into the development of a set of benchmarks for

¹ Henceforth referred to as the “evaluation”

² European Commission (2021), [Better Regulation Guidelines, SWD\(2021\) 305 final](#). All five mandatory evaluation criteria are covered in this report.

future projects and campaigns in the field of P/CVE, including best practice examples from the CSEP projects. These benchmarks, as well as the evaluation conclusions and lessons learnt also fed into the development of two “guidebooks” which aimed to provide guidance and best practice advice for practitioners of future P/CVE campaigns as well as policy makers. Together, the conclusions, lessons learnt, benchmarks and guidebooks provide insights for what works and doesn’t work in the field of P/CVE campaigns and activities.

Key conclusions from the evaluation findings at the programme level

What worked?

As a pilot programme, the CSEP was an important first step in testing the types of support that the Commission could provide to empower Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and address target audiences in the EU susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online. While support from the Commission to CSOs is not a new phenomenon, the CSEP was unique in that it was directly targeted to CSOs and organisations in the development of P/CVE campaigns – something that was historically supported at the national, regional and local levels. Indeed, the CSEP was found to have a clear EU added value by stakeholders. Considering that there are no other programmes at the EU level which directly fund communications campaigns in the field of P/CVE means that the CSEP was able to provide targeted support to organisations which may not have had access to comparable funding at the national level.

What didn’t work and what can be done?

The initial design and vision of the CSEP was found to have evolved during its implementation, with greater insights being uncovered for the potential role of CSOs as part of P/CVE campaigns/ projects. The CSEP was conceived as a pilot programme to support CSOs in providing effective alternative and counter narratives to terrorist and extremist content online, however evidence suggests that this was not entirely achieved as part of the communication campaigns. The evaluation found that CSOs were primarily “empowered” through their role as knowledge brokers and practitioners between projects and local contexts. Evidence from the evaluation pointed to the first phase of the programme being overly ambitious in expecting the successful implementation of campaigns to dissuade individuals from radicalisation without effectively supporting CSOs and partner organisations to do so. The development of a future CSEP would benefit from re-aligning the intended vision of the use of CSOs through not being directly responsible for the design and implementation of the projects but rather as knowledge brokers and “bridges” with potential target audiences.

The approach to fund projects and provide capacity building across all societal levels made it difficult for projects to achieve tangible results, thus highlighting the need for greater considerations for how EU level interventions in the field of P/CVE can achieve impacts. Campaigns which tailored interventions to the specific, hyper-local target groups, were found to have communication activities that were more relevant and effective. The Commission, however, also included elements within the CSEP which were geared towards the EU level (e.g. introducing the concept of cross-border collaboration). This created a paradox, which conflicted with literature and research on P/CVE, that point to activities at the hyper local level being more effective. Thus, future considerations should be made to whether the Commission should explore much more targeted support for campaigns at the hyper local level, or whether support should be provided at an EU level, but more from the perspective of capacity building activities and operational support.

The objectives of the CSEP were found to be broad, and in some cases overly ambitious, emphasising the potential for realignment of future programme objectives. The general objectives for example were found to be relevant, however the objectives were not precise enough, and led to different projects having different interpretations of how the objectives should be implemented. The specific objectives of the

CSEP were also found to have been overly ambitious and difficult (if not impossible) to achieve by projects. The specific objective to halt radicalisation and recruitment processes was perceived as being overly ambitious and difficult for projects to prove that they had worked towards or achieved it. Considering the inherent challenges of the prevention of radicalisation, a future initiative should weigh up the needs at different societal levels to help prevent radicalisation within communities against the scope and mandate of the EU to uphold the values of promoting tolerance and EU/democratic fundamental rights while maintaining subsidiarity. This ambition should also be aligned with the decisions made in relation to whether a future initiative should be focussed on funding communication campaigns or capacity building.

The CSEP lacked a forward-looking approach regarding the target audiences of the funded campaigns, thus there is a growing need for considerations on which audiences are the most relevant to target. The evaluation found that the majority of projects had a strong emphasis on tackling religious radicalisation, with the focus of the projects mostly being on radicalisation stemming from Muslim communities. Contextually, it is important for a future EU initiative to take into account the turbulent political and societal shifts in Europe to widen the target audience and allow for flexibility to adapt to changing context.

Key conclusions from the evaluation findings at the project level

What worked?

The evaluation found that CSEP-funded projects made a contribution to building capacity within CSOs by delivering several training and empowerment activities to counteract terrorist and extremist content. Similarly, while the predominant focus of almost all of the funded projects was on the development of online campaigns, offline activities were found to fill the gap of low levels of engagement in online activities and were viewed to be an integral and supportive part of online campaigns.

With regards to the communication campaigns, the majority of CSEP-funded projects were found to operate with a clear vision of the target groups to address, messages to deploy, messengers and channels to use to prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism. Three projects (Oltre l'orizzonte, YouthRightOn and D.O.B.T) were found to be most successful in their design and implementation. The key factors for success were [1] well explained objectives, [2] a clear theory of change, [3] targeted research into the target groups and contexts, [4] good use of communication channels, [5] a balanced mix of off and online activities, [6] strong expertise in the design of the messages; and [7] a well-established monitoring and evaluation methodology.

Offline activities were considered to be an integral part of communication campaigns. Offline activities were found to provide greater opportunities for meaningful change and impact on the target audience. Indeed, almost all of the projects were found to operate with online campaigns and offline activities. Thus, a future version of the programme would benefit from funding projects which include a holistic approach, involving a combination of online campaigns and offline activities. Similarly, online interventions should not be a 'must-have' of P-CVE campaigning.

What didn't work and what can be done?

Evidence of tangible results and impact on target audiences of the funded projects through the projects was lacking, with insufficient monitoring and evaluation making it difficult for projects to discern clear impacts on the prevention of radicalisation. The lack of tangible evidence of impacts was found to be exacerbated by a disconnect between the level of ambition and objectives of the CSEP, and the reality of what individual-funded projects could possibly achieve within the financial scope and timescale of the CSEP calls for proposals. The evaluation also found that while all projects conducted monitoring and evaluation activities, the methodological designs were often insufficiently robust, with

differing units of analysis and different aspects of performance being covered. The lack of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) metrics to measure behavioural change among the funded projects also meant that it was difficult to identify and make tangible the concrete, measured impacts of the funded campaigns. Future projects would therefore benefit from the development of a robust M&E framework which includes clearly defined objectives and KPIs on how behavioural change can be realistically measured. To avoid the risk of bias in the M&E results, an objective evaluator should be included to carry out all M&E activities to monitor and measure the performance, and to build a feedback system so that lessons learnt are continuously brought into the refinement of the project activities.

While most projects had a clear vision of their campaign during the design stage, funded projects encountered difficulties in actually implementing them, suggesting a greater need for communications expertise to be utilised in future projects. Where projects were comparatively less successful was in tailoring their messages through the testing of the messages before the campaign launch, and co-designing the messages with the target audience. This led to mixed results in the ability of the projects to achieve their intended impact by the end of the projects. Relatedly, the evaluation points to the importance of involving communications companies in the design and implementation of campaigns as a factor for success. While the calls for proposals stipulated the need to involve communication experts in projects, there is a need to ensure this actually happens in practice as the inclusion of strong communication campaign expertise would be important in ensuring that the project can be practically implemented and realised.

The structure and expertise within project consortia and partnerships was also found to have a large bearing on project outputs, raising the need for a medium sized consortium with strong expertise. Indeed, successful cooperation and project delivery was linked to the inclusion of partners in the consortia who had previous solid expertise in the area of P/CVE. Strong digital communication expertise was also highly beneficial to the effectiveness of the projects. The role of CSOs as a bridge between the projects and the target audiences and local contexts was found to be crucial during the design and implementation stages of projects. While a strong and experienced consortium generally led to more positive results, the evaluation also found that larger consortia of over 10 partners were at risk of struggling with streamlined and effective communication, collaboration, and implementation during the projects, thus having an impact on project delivery and results. Thus, future projects would benefit from operating with a consortium of less than 10 partners and the inclusion of partner organisations who are specialised/have a strong expertise in P/CVE as well as digital communications and online campaigning.

The COVID-19 pandemic played a role in the ability for projects to operate both effectively and efficiently. Almost all of the projects were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, primarily due to the inability to conduct offline activities. This was seen to hinder meaningful engagement with target audiences and/or building trustworthy relations with the target audience which would allow for the interventions to be effective. The pandemic was also found to be a factor in the inefficiency of projects due the impact on available budgets, activities, delivery modes and other decisions relevant for the achievement of objectives and deliverables.

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Table of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
CfP	Call for proposal
CSEP	Civil Society Empowerment Programme
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CTC	Counter-Terrorism Coordinator
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DG HOME	Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
EAS	European Agenda on Security
ECTC	European Counter-Terrorism Centre
EQ	Evaluation Question
EQM	Evaluation Question Matrix
ESCN	European Strategic Communications Network
EU	European Union
EUIF	European Union Internet Forum
EUR	Euro
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
GAMMMA+	Goal, Audience, Message, Medium, Media, Action
HERA	European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority
INTPA	Directorate-General for International Partnerships
IRU	Internet Referral Unit
ISF	Internal Security Fund
ISSG	Inter-Service Steering Group
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
P/CVE	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
RAN	Radicalisation Awareness Network

Glossary

Table 1. List of terms

Term	Definition
GAMMMA+	Guideline for carrying out effective alternative and counter narrative campaigns comprising the following elements: Goal, Audience, Message, Messenger, Media, Action plus Monitoring and Evaluation.
Online Communication Campaigns	<p>Online communication campaign(s), under the calls for proposals should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be created by or with the strong involvement of civil society partners embedded in a solid communication strategy, with a well-defined/measurable objective and call to action, and; • develop an alternative or counter narrative for a well-defined target audience in the EU that is vulnerable to radicalisation, combined, where appropriate, with off-line activities designed to maximise the impact of the campaign.
Civil Society Organisation	<p>Civil society refers to all forms of social action carried out by individuals or groups who are neither connected to, nor managed by, the State.</p> <p>A civil society organisation³ is an organisational structure whose members serve the general interest through a democratic process, and which plays the role of mediator between public authorities and citizens.</p> <p>Article 15 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union recognises civil society's role in the EU's good governance. Article 11 of the Treaty on European Union stresses the need for the EU to have an open, transparent and regular dialogue with civil society organisations, e.g. when preparing proposals for EU laws.</p> <p>Examples of such organisations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social partners (trades unions & employers' groups); • non-governmental organisations (e.g. for environmental & consumer protection); • grassroots organisations (e.g. youth & family groupings). • The European Economic and Social Committee represents civil society at EU level.
CSEP General Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Address target audiences in the EU susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online, those on the brink of radicalisation as well as those who have already been radicalised (target audiences' perceived or real grievances should be addressed); 2. Provide the target audience with credible alternatives and positive narratives or expose and challenge terrorist and extremist online propaganda; 3. Address push and pull factors of terrorist and extremist content online; 4. Actively contribute to promoting tolerance and EU/democratic fundamental rights and values.

³ See definition here: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:civil_society_organisation

CSEP Specific objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bring about behaviour change dissuading target audience from promoting terrorism and violent extremism and/or using violence; 2. Grow civic engagement and take active stance in democratic processes by target audiences; 3. Halt radicalisation and recruitment processes; 4. Enhance (digital) resilience and critical thinking of the target audience against terrorist and extremist propaganda on-and offline.
Primary prevention	<p>The goal of primary prevention is to proactively target the causes or factors (individual, interpersonal, community, or societal) that may be at the root of the dynamics of radicalisation leading to violence of any type. This type of prevention is therefore fundamentally concerned with fostering the resilience of all members of the population, regardless of individual risks or specific criteria.</p>
Secondary prevention	<p>This type of early prevention is aimed at reducing vulnerabilities and risk factors in groups and environments identified as being possible breeding grounds for radicalisation. It therefore encourages the types of situations and contexts likely to offer positive support for vulnerable individuals. Secondary prevention also targets professionals in the community who can play a major role in prevention if they are made aware of the phenomenon and properly equipped to understand and—if necessary –respond to it.</p>

1. Introduction

The present document constitutes the Final Report for the Evaluation of impact and effectiveness of counter- and alternative campaigns stemming from the [Civil Society Empowerment Programme](#) (CSEP) aiming at preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism⁴.

The purpose of the study is to perform an analysis of the communications campaigns performed by the projects within the CSEP and draw conclusions and lessons learned, based on six evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, EU-added value and sustainability⁵. The evaluation assesses the design and implementation of the individual communication campaigns that were funded by CSEP, as well as their impact on the target audiences (mainly those on the verge of radicalisation).

The study has both a formative and a summative element, in that it is interested in both the process (“how”/ “why”) and impact (“what”) of the campaigns funded by CSEP. The aim of the evaluation is two-fold. Firstly, the summative element of the study assesses to what extent the campaigns funded by CSEP attained their objectives during the period 2017-2021. This part of the study placed a particular emphasis on evaluating the results and effects of each of the individual campaigns funded by the programme and sought to understand their impact on the target audiences.

While there are inherent challenges in evaluating the actual effect on radicalisation, the study assesses the extent to which the funded projects influenced the behavioural drivers and levels which are associated with radicalisation (see Appendix 3). Through the triangulation of analysis with evidence from literature about what works in preventing radicalisation, the study provides evidence-based assumptions on the effects of the campaigns on radicalisation.

Secondly, the formative element of the study provides lessons learned for the implementation and design of the campaigns going forward as well as identifying the most successful projects to establish benchmarks for the next CSEP cycle. Final lessons learned are made on the basis of aggregated findings.

The study covers all 20 CSEP projects beginning from the 2017 call for applications, including the 2018 call, up to the end of 2021. The geographical scope covers the same scope as adopted in each of the analysed campaigns.

1.1. Overview of methodology

The study has adopted a mixed methods approach combining a qualitative and quantitative focus. To gather this data, the following activities were undertaken:

- **An in-depth desk-based review** and a thorough assessment (including over 180 questions) of all 20 projects funded by the Programme as part of a scorecard analysis exercise.
- **A consultation approach** which ensures that the views of all relevant stakeholders are considered, primarily through EU level and project level interviews to gather more in-depth information on the impact of the communication activities of the Programme.

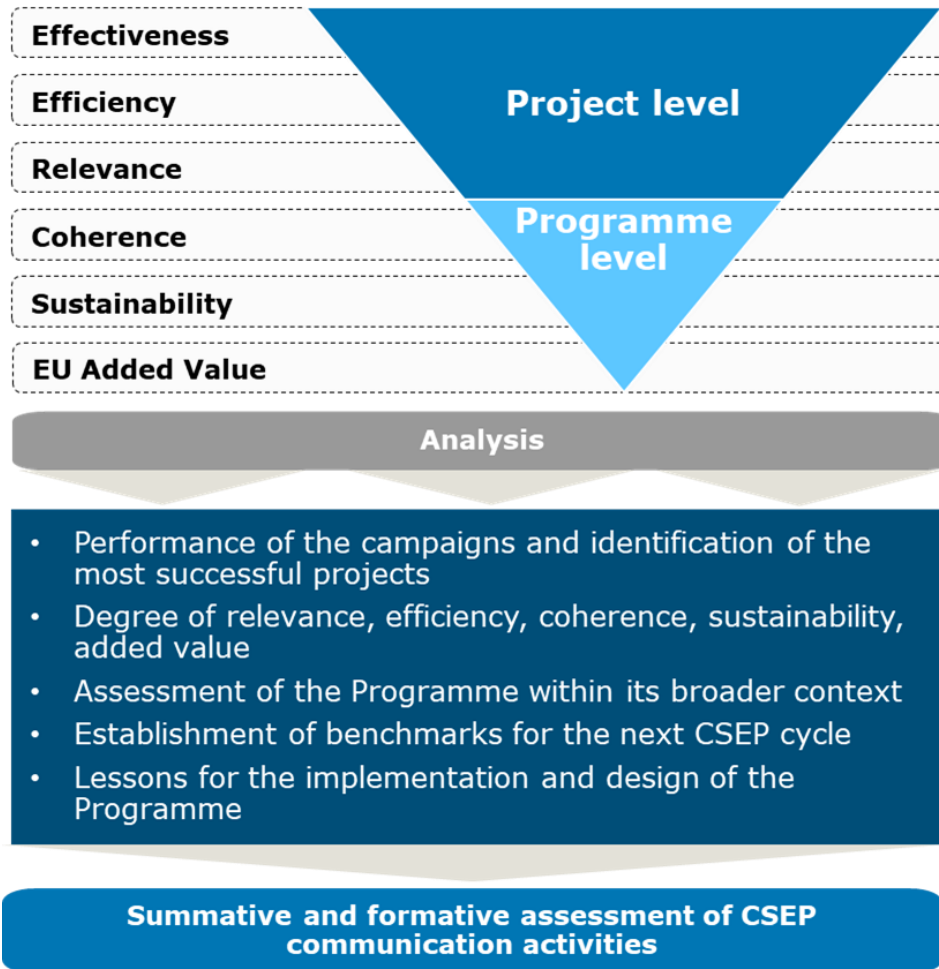
⁴ Henceforth referred to as the “study”

⁵ European Commission (2021), [Better Regulation Guidelines, SWD\(2021\) 305 final](#). All five mandatory evaluation criteria are covered in this report.

- **A post-testing of project campaigns** which investigates to what extent the communication assets (e.g. videos, images, songs, video games) produced by the CSEP project teams were effective in engaging their target audiences in the context of preventing radicalisation.

Evidence from each of these activities provide an evidence-based assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, EU added value and sustainability of the Programme. Figure 1 below provides a visual summary of the methodological approach used for the study. The full methodology can be found in Appendix 1.

Figure 1 – Overview of methodological approach



Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

2. Background

The chapter serves as a brief background to the CSEP, explaining its foundation and rationale. It also serves to provide a summary of the contextual analysis using the contextual analysis (Appendix 3) on scientific knowledge and contextual information in the field of P/CVE. A full description of the state of implementation of the CSEP can be found in Appendix 6.

2.1. Description of the intervention and its objectives

2.1.1. Foundation and rationale of the programme

In June 2016, as part of the European strategy to prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism, the Commission provided for the launch of the **Civil Society Empowerment Programme (CSEP)**, to be coordinated by the RAN Centre of Excellence, together with industry and civil society partners across Member States¹⁶⁰. The programme was created under the umbrella of the EU Internet Forum, launched in December 2015 to fulfil two main objectives⁶, namely:

- Reduce accessibility to terrorist content online;
- Increase the volume of effective alternative narratives online.

CSEP was conceived as an initiative to support civil society organisations⁷ (CSOs) to develop expertise to elaborate and disseminate alternative and counter-narratives online. As such, it responded to the EU Internet Forum's second objective.

The programme was structured around three phases⁸:

- **Capacity building**, consisting of a training programme for civil society organisations across Europe. This was implemented through the RAN Centre of Excellence in 2017;
- **Financial support to CSOs developing alternative and counter-narrative campaigns online**. The second phase was implemented through two successive calls for proposals, launched in 2017 and in 2018 respectively;
- **Evaluation** of the programme, which corresponds to this current exercise and (final) report.

Phase one of the CSEP: Capacity building activities for CSOs

As briefly described in the points above, the first phase constituted a series of training activities that were conducted with CSOs across Europe. The training activities were implemented through RAN and was funded by the European Commission, Internal Security Fund- Police. This phase was carried out in 2017. These trainings aimed at providing CSOs

⁶ European Commission (2017), Comprehensive Assessment of EU Security Policy - Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council - Ninth progress report towards an effective and genuine Security Union

⁷ By definition, Civil society organisations (CSOs) are independent actors, organised on a not-for-profit and voluntary basis, and active in different fields, such as poverty reduction, emergency aid, human rights, environment etc. Source: https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/our-partners/civil-society_en#header-1264

⁸ RAN (2017), Ex-post paper - RAN CSEP kick-off workshop

with the necessary skills and knowledge to create online counter- and alternative narrative campaigns⁹.

Phase two of the CSEP: Financial support to CSOs

The second phase of the programme began in 2017, with the launch of two successive calls for proposals (CfPs), respectively published in October 2017 and October 2018¹⁰. The CfPs took place under the Internal Security Fund – Police, set up with a budget of approximately EUR 1 billion for the 2014-2020 period to support the implementation of the EU Internal Security Strategy¹¹. The October 2017 CfP originally had a budget of EUR 6 million¹² while the October 2018 CfP originally had a budget of approximately EUR 5.7 million¹³.

The two CfPs laid out the same requirements to be met and objectives to be achieved by the projects supported. The primary objectives included:

- Targeting audiences in the EU susceptible to radicalisation and terrorist content online, those on the brink of radicalisation, and those already radicalised;
- Offering the target audience credible alternatives and positive narratives or exposing and challenging extremist online propaganda;
- Addressing push and pull factors triggered by terrorist and extremist content online;
- Contributing to the promotion of tolerance and EU/democratic fundamental rights and values.

The projects were required to deliver both an **online** communication campaign(s) - providing an alternative or counter-narrative for a well-defined target – and, where appropriate, **off-line** activities to maximise the impact of the project. In addition, a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the reach and impact of the campaign(s) was requested, alongside a set of lessons learned and good practices to inform future similar projects.

2.2. The intervention logic of the CSEP

On the basis of the information presented in the section above and in consonance with the Terms of Reference of this Study, Figure 2 below presents the intervention logic for CSEP, providing a succinct visual representation overview of the needs, inputs, outcomes and impacts and how these link to the programmes' objectives. The Intervention logic was refined over the course of the inception phase, taking into account the findings from the familiarisation interviews and the preliminary desk review.

In addition, the intervention logic takes into account the fact that while the legal base of CSEP sets out its aims as “*empowering European civil society organisations to increase the volume of effective narratives online which counter and challenge that of the terrorist narrative and provide positive alternatives*” and “*help ramp up civil society expertise across*

⁹ Training material, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/civil-society-empowerment-programme/training-material_en

¹⁰ Internal Security Fund – Police (2017), Call for proposals for alternative and counter narrative campaigns supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism – Civil Society Empowerment Programme (CSEP), ISFP-2017-AG-CSEP; Internal Security Fund – Police (2018), Call for proposals on the Civil Society Empowerment Programme (CSEP) – campaigns with counter and alternative narrative to radicalisation implemented by Civil society organisations, ISFP-2018-AG-CT-CSEP

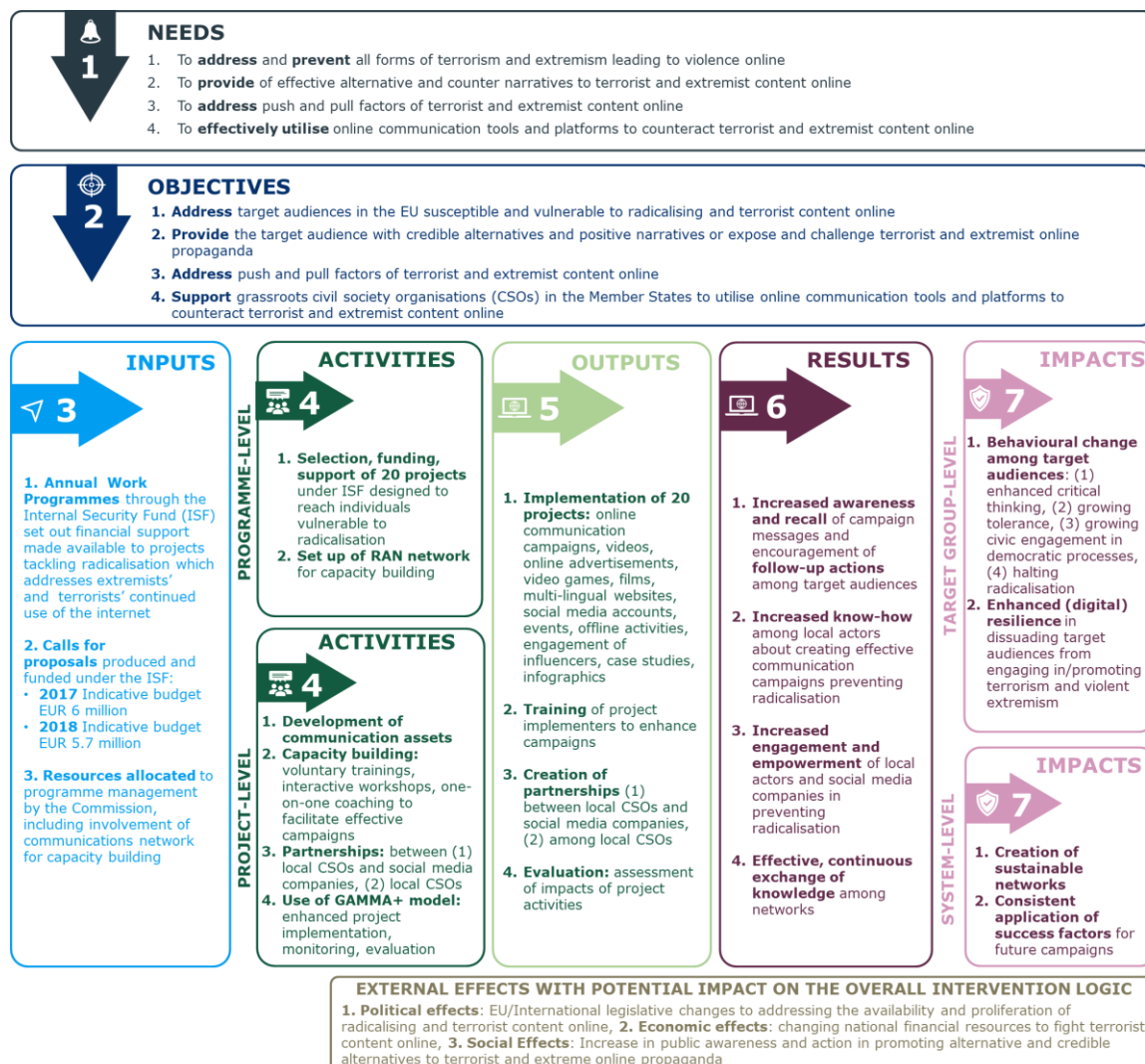
¹¹ Internal Security Fund (ISF) website, <https://eufundingoverview.be/funding/internal-security-fund-isf>

¹² Internal Security Fund – Police (2017)

¹³ Internal Security Fund – Police (2018), Call for proposals on the Civil Society Empowerment Programme (CSEP) – campaigns with counter and alternative narrative to radicalisation implemented by Civil society organisations, ISFP-2018-AG-CT-CSEP

the EU in the development of powerful alternative narratives online”¹⁴ and the Terms of Reference for this study list the objectives of the Programme as being those presented in the figure below, the objective of the Programme is not only limited to violence online and the projects funded by the Programme carried out both online and offline activities.

Figure 2 - Intervention logic of the CSEP



Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

2.3. Summary of scientific knowledge and contextual information

As part of this evaluation, a review of scientific knowledge and contextual information in the field of P/CVE was conducted. The aim of this contextual analysis was to develop a more nuanced understanding of radicalisation in the EU, online and offline. This included a literature review of academic and scientific studies into the many possible pathways into radicalisation, as well as the main drivers and evidence of campaign approaches which work best to halt the spread of radicalisation.

This context is particularly pertinent in understanding the relevance of the campaigns against the objectives of the Programme, particularly to the degree to which they are addressing their target audience. The central points of the contextual analysis (Appendix 3)

¹⁴ COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL Ninth progress report towards an effective and genuine Security Union (COM(2017) 407 final).

have been validated and nuanced in interviews with two researchers in the field. However, it must be emphasised that the evidence of effective preventive strategies and interventions is scarce as most studies focuses on activities and short-term results.

2.3.1. Defining radicalisation (what)

The concept of radicalisation as a process is central to European prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism¹⁵. European prevention strategies often refer to violent extremism and terrorism as stemming from an individual or collective radicalisation process, which eventually can legitimise the use of violence or other illegal acts (committed by the individual itself or others) for political goals⁸⁸. Thus, it is this process that prevention strategies and interventions seek to turn around. To develop targeted and effective strategies and interventions, a deep understanding of the process of radicalisation is crucial. A systematic review by Christmann¹⁶ identifies common features across empirical studies:

"Despite the identification of different stages in the radicalization process, all studies agree that there is a stage of individual change (for example, increase in religiosity, search for identity) that is enhanced through external aspects (for example, experienced discrimination or racism, or a perceived attack against Muslims such as the wars in Bosnia and Iraq), and a move to violent radicalisation, usually taking place when the individual socializes with like-minded people. These stages are not necessarily sequential, and they can also overlap, meaning that a person may skip a stage in reaching militant action or alternatively may become disillusioned at any given point and abandon the process altogether." (Christmann, K., 2012:21)

According to several authors, radicalisation does not necessarily lead to the individual's or group's engagement in physical violence, among these acts of terrorism¹⁷. Nonetheless, political discourses tend to focus on *violent* extremism and terrorism as the endpoint of radicalisation¹⁸. This is also evident in a European context. In its 2005 Communication, the European Commission defined "violent radicalisation" as the "phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to terrorism"¹⁹.

More recently, the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) referred to radicalisation as the "process through which an individual comes to adopt extremist political, social, or religious ideas and aspirations which then serve to reject diversity, tolerance and freedom of choice, and legitimise breaking the rule of law and using violence towards property and people"²⁰. As such, radicalisation is defined as the *process* of which the endpoint is violent actions/extremism, although the individual process towards this end point may not be direct nor necessarily end there²¹.

¹⁵ EUCPN (2019), European Crime Prevention Monitor 2019/1: Radicalisation and violent extremism. Brussels: European Crime Prevention Network

¹⁶ Christmann, K. (2012): Preventing religious radicalisation and violent extremism: A systematic review of the research evidence. UK: Youth Justice Board for England and Wales.

¹⁷ Schmid (2013); EUCPN (2019)

¹⁸ Hardy (2018); Ramboll, (2018), Mapping of knowledge of extremism and prevention of extremism; Neumann, P. R. (2013), The trouble with radicalisation; Borum, R. (2012), "Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories.", Journal of Strategic Security 4, no. 4: 7-36

¹⁹ European Commission (2005), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council concerning Terrorist recruitment: addressing the factors contributing to violent radicalisation, p. 2

²⁰ Lenos, S. et al. (2017), RAN polarization management manual, RAN ex post paper, p. 5

²¹ Borum, R. (2012), "Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories." Journal of Strategic Security 4, no. 4: 7-36

2.3.2. Understanding the causes of radicalisation (why)

There is no linear pathway, nor fixed set of characteristics, that uniquely explain individual vulnerability to radicalisation and engagement in violent extremism²². In recent years, individuals involved in terrorist activities were found to belong to heterogeneous social backgrounds while undergoing diverse processes of violent radicalisation and being influenced by various motivations²³. In turn, the existence of a specific “terrorist personality” - characterised by mental and social fragility, abnormality or irrationality - associated with engagement in violent extremism and terrorism - has been excluded in the literature²⁴.

However, while research has not been able to establish direct causal links between root causes and radicalisation leading to violent extremism, there is consensus that radicalisation and extremism is created in a highly complex interplay involving multiple factors at individual level, group level and societal level²⁵. The radicalisation process is personal and unique.

- **Firstly, the individual level focuses on the factors of significance to the individual's risk of or vulnerability to radicalisation.** The individual's lack of self-esteem and a sense of identity and purpose, an uncertain existence or unstable family situation are potential risk factors²⁶. At the opposite end of the self-esteem continuum is narcissistic personality traits which in some cases constitute a risk factor on the individual level²⁷.
- **Secondly, the group level focuses on the dynamics and factors of significance to the emergence and maintenance of extremist groups, as well as groups' ideologies and narratives and their recruitment, propaganda and communication.** This may, for example, include social interactions in groups, the significance of the ideology to extremism, or the role of social media in relation to recruitment. Research indicates that the individual's lack of self-esteem and a sense of identity in interplay with group dynamics is one of the most important factors in the radicalisation process.
- **Thirdly, the societal level focuses on the general societal dynamics and factors in the surrounding society that are of significance to extremism.** Research rejects that socio-economic disadvantage in itself causes individuals or groups to be radicalised. Most individuals experiencing socio-economic disadvantage do not become radicalised. However, socio-economic disadvantage can aggravate perceptions of injustice and discrimination on individual, group or international level, and hence play a role in radicalisation²⁸.

To summarise, several interlinked factors at societal, group and individual level may play a role in the individual's or group's radicalisation process. The societal level provides the broader framework for the emergence and maintenance of the extremist group, both ideologically and socially, and for the recruitment, propaganda and communication activities of the extremist group. The group level – including the individual's network – further

²² Harper, E. (2018), Reconceptualizing the drivers of violent extremism: an agenda for child & youth resilience;

²³ Europol (2020), European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report; Europol (2021), European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report

²⁴ Bigo, D. et al. (2014), Preventing and countering youth radicalisation in the EU, Document requested by the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE); Schmid (2013)

²⁵ Ramboll (2018)

²⁶ Ramboll (2018), Hardy (2018)

²⁷ Cf. Interview with Academic

²⁸ Hardy (2018)m Ramboll (2018)

contributes to the maintenance of, and adherence to, an extremist group by reinforcing beliefs and worldview and creating a sense of belonging. In turn, individual-level push and pull factors may come into play throughout the radicalisation process, as they contribute to individual vulnerability²⁹. The complex nature of the radicalisation process and the absence of common pathways among those becoming radicalised challenges the identification of target groups, hence the development of tailored-made prevention strategies³⁰.

2.3.3. Understanding enablers of radicalisation on and off-line (how)

Two types of generally recognised modes through which a person can be radicalised exists, namely recruitment and self-radicalisation. None of the modes do solely owe to the interplay of push and pull factors; they also depend on the existence of enablers³¹.

Recruitment represents the primary mode of radicalisation and is the process through which members of a terrorist or extremist organisation actively recruit new members. It can happen either in person or online or, most often, through a combination of on and off-line activities¹¹³. In either case, influence of peer networks and/or charismatic recruiters constitute the primary enabler of individuals' involvement in extremist groups; most individuals are recruited through contacts with active members, through kinship or friendship, attracted by the recognition and a sense of belonging offered by the group³². Indeed, radicalisation is often triggered by psychological needs (i.e., lack of self-esteem and a sense of identity and purpose) in interplay with group dynamics offering meaning and belonging as well as by personal life situations and experiences³³.

Self-radicalisation is defined as the process of embracing radical beliefs without the support or active involvement of a group, hence primarily through the consumption of online content, without requiring affiliation³⁴. In that connection, information technology – including the internet – is considered the main enabler of radicalisation³⁵. While increased risk of self-radicalisation has recently gained greater attention among policymakers due to the growing role played by the Internet and social media as platforms to spread terrorist propaganda, as a result of ISIS-inspired attacks where perpetrators were inspired by, but not members of, ISIS, and, more recently as a result of the isolation induced by anti-COVID-19 restrictions, online content and interactions rarely represent the sole factors enabling radicalisation. Most often, the individual's exposure to extremist material online is paralleled by off-line group networks and social relationships³⁶.

In most recent decades, the internet has also become a flourishing environment for recruitment. It has come to play a central role in influencing the radicalisation process, by facilitating access to a network of radicalised people by vulnerable individuals, and vice-versa³⁷. In recent years extremist content has progressively moved from big platforms to

²⁹ Ramboll (2018), Mapping of knowledge of extremism and prevention of extremism

³⁰ Harper (2018); Orav (2015)

³¹ Harper, E. (2018) Reconceptualizing the drivers of violent extremism: an agenda for child & youth resilience

³² Bigo, D. et al. (2014); Harper (2018); interview with Academic

³³ Hardy (2018); Lara-Cabrera R. et al., (2017), Measuring the Radicalisation Risk in Social Networks, Special section on heterogeneous crowdsourced data analytics, IEEE Access

³⁴ Hollewell G.F., Longpré N., (2021), Radicalization in the Social Media Era: Understanding the Relationship between Self-Radicalization and the Internet. International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology

³⁵ Hardy (2018)

³⁶ Hardy (2018); Lara-Cabrera R. et al., (2017), Measuring the Radicalisation Risk in Social Networks, Special section on heterogeneous crowdsourced data analytics, IEEE Access; Bigo, D. et al. (2014); Winter, C., Neumann, P., Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., Ranstorp, M., Vidino, L., Fürst, J. (2020), Online extremism: Research trends in internet activism, radicalization, and counter-strategies. International Journal of Conflict and Violence, 14(2), 1-20, Europol (2021); European Commission (2021), Strategic orientations on a coordinated EU approach to prevention of radicalisation for 2021, priorities and key actions

³⁷ Harper (2018); EUCPN (2019)

smaller, niche, channels due to an increased regulatory (and societal) pressure on platforms led to enforce their terms and conditions (T&C) regarding violent and extremist content, hate speech etc³⁸. The most recent trend in online radicalisation is through gaming, which is an evolving channel for recruitment that is difficult to moderate and penetrate.

Recruitment of new members to a terrorist or extremist organisation most often happens through a combination of on- and off-line activities¹¹³. In continuation of this, it is a crucial point that the on/off-line divide that some P/CVE interventions is based on is imagined. Digital natives do not experience a distinction between on- and off-line communication, interaction and relations, it is all entangled and part of their immediate reality. Thus, the idea of online radicalisation, and P/CVE programmes and interventions that solely address the online aspect of radicalisation risk to be less effective than holistic interventions³⁹.

2.3.4. Prevention strategies to radicalisation and violent extremism: main traits

Preventive strategies constitute a key pillar within broader policies aimed at reducing the likelihood of individuals engaging in radicalisation and violent extremism. The bulk of the literature regarding preventive strategies focuses on the design and implementation of interventions aimed at addressing the root causes of extremism as highlighted above. These interventions are typically known under the umbrella term “preventing and countering violent extremism” (P/CVE)⁴⁰. As academics recognise that terrorism ‘is not simply violence but communication’, the focus of P/CVE interventions and its surrounding research has primarily been on how to respond strategically to the communication of extremist groups online and offline⁴¹.

A review of the literature about radicalisation prevention efforts identified three main objectives when approaching individuals or groups deemed at risk of radicalisation or that are already radicalised. These included:

- **Development of knowledge and capacity among individuals**, aiming at increasing individuals’ knowledge and skills on relevant topics – such as democracy, tolerance and respect for other cultures – and often targeting children and young people.
- **Raising awareness on extremism and its consequences**, consisting in the provision of information on how extremism can affect other individuals and society. This is done primarily by means of counter-narrative campaigns and is aimed at counteracting extremist lifestyle, ideology and propaganda.
- **Provision of support and guidance at vulnerable stages of life**, including actions intended to support young people and adults at risk of radicalisation to choose an alternative path, and individuals who are part of extremist groups in their way out of these environments¹¹⁷.

To achieve the above-mentioned targets, P/CVE communication strategies, both online and offline, have become a key component of preventive policy and programming. In the

³⁸ UK Parliament (2020), Online Extremism, Postnote; Kirdemir, B. (2020), Evolution of Violent Extremist and Terrorist Threats on Social Web, Edam, Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies

³⁹ Cf. interviews with Academics

⁴⁰ White, J. (2021), Interventions Targeting Youth Engagement - A Systematic Literature Review of Effectiveness of Counter-Terrorism and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Activities, Royal United Services Institute, Published by Policy and Operations Evaluation Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

⁴¹ Glazzard, A. & Reed, A., Beyond Prevention: The Role of Strategic Communications Across the Four Pillars of Counterterrorism Strategy

literature, a distinction is often made between **counter-narratives and alternative narratives**. There is a significant ambiguity regarding the definitions of these concepts in the literature as the terms are defined in a variety of ways and often used interchangeably. This is particularly the case regarding the use of the term “counter-narratives”, which has been used as a label for “anything from a ‘simple rebuttal’ to an umbrella term of ‘programmes of strategic communication’⁴². At its most basic level, however, scholars generally agree that counter-narratives aim to “address the underlying logic of a dominant narrative” and is thus inherently reactive. Conversely, alternative narratives do not directly address violent extremist content, but rather aim at providing positive stories, “focusing on what we are for rather than against”. This is relevant in relation to the first M – Message – in the GAMMMA+ model (see the Glossary on page ix for a full description of the model).

Finally, the P/CVE interventions often suffer from a lack of providing a robust theory of change consistent with the insights from the literature¹³⁵. This has been attributed to a sense of urgency surrounding radicalisation and violent extremism leading to an approach of “let’s just try something” where interventions are developed without a clear concept of why and how individuals are expected to react to the interventions⁴³. In sum, rigorous and empirically grounded evaluation of P/CVE interventions is urgently needed as there is currently an overwhelming lack of evidence of what works and does not work, not least in relation to strategic communications as a feature of P/CVE programmes⁴⁴.

2.3.5. Prevention strategies to radicalisation and violent extremism: what works?

Regarding the development of knowledge and capacity, P/CVE interventions have been associated with an improvement in critical thinking and media literacy, which was conducive to enhanced self-regulation and individual resilience. In particular, providing the youth with the tools needed to safely navigate social media was proven to be relatively effective in mitigating wider anti-social behaviour. Whether campaigns and interventions aiming at strengthening critical thinking and media literacy have a preventive or even mitigating effect on radicalisation is unsure in terms of evidence, but it is likely to contribute positively⁴⁵. When conducting these types of training programmes or courses, studies find that activities using **co-creation** as a tool have shown positive outcomes in terms of capacity building. An example of such a co-creation activity was two initiatives where young people were trained to create and run their own social media campaigns⁴⁶.

Regarding raising awareness of extremism and its consequences, counter-narratives have in some cases seemed to provide content that enhanced the consideration of different viewpoints and critical thinking. For counter-narratives relying on persuasion techniques, the literature even suggests that such attempts might result in **boomerang effects** among radicalised people which might exacerbate their extreme attitudes⁴⁷. The literature suggests that this can be attributed to the fact that individuals generally tend to reject information and arguments at odds with their strong baseline attitudes. Counter-narratives that address the violent strategy can make sense (the message being “we do not reject your experience of

⁴² Jones, M. (2020): Through the Looking Glass – Assessing the Evidence Base for P/CVE Communications

⁴³ Warrington, A. (2018): ‘Sometimes you just have to try something’ - A critical analysis of Danish state-led initiatives countering online radicalisation

⁴⁴ White (2021): Interventions Targeting Youth Engagement - A Systematic Literature Review of Effectiveness of Counter-Prevention strategies to radicalisation and violent extremism: main traits; RAN (2022): Event Conclusion Paper: Member states workshop

⁴⁵ Interview with Academic

⁴⁶ Jones, M. & Freear, M. (2021): Consolidated Overview Paper: Lessons Learned From Strategic Communication and Alternative and Counter Narrative Campaigns

⁴⁷ Carthy, S. et al (2020): Counter-narratives for the prevention of violent radicalisation: A systematic review of targeted interventions

social injustice or political grievance, but violence is not the solution”), while narratives that argue with the grievance or perception of social injustice might be counter-productive⁴⁸. In other words, **exposure is not synonymous with persuasion**, which underlines that the use of vanity metrics to quantify behavioural change should be avoided¹⁴². Instead, recent literature suggests that **alternative narratives** generally could be viewed as a preferable option compared to the counter-narratives approach.

To enable the **provision of support and guidance at vulnerable stages of life**, the literature strongly suggests the use of integrated interventions leveraging a **holistic approach** for strategic communications as a driver for impact. This means, for instance, that online message campaigns should be supplemented within a wider set of activities offline to strengthen trust and the tangibility of the intervention within the target groups⁴⁹.

Some general, cross-cutting drivers and barriers for impact of P/CVE interventions have been suggested in the literature:

- **Firstly, recent literature has emphasized the importance of tailoring the interventions to specific, hyper-local target groups, e.g., young people living in a specific neighbourhood.** This requires a deep understanding of not just the demographics of the target groups, but more importantly also their interests and concerns¹⁴².
- **Secondly, choosing the right messenger for campaigns, dialogues and one-to-one engagements is considered a key element for the effectiveness of any P/CVE intervention.** Such a choice is context-dependent and contributes to the authenticity of the message delivered. The involvement of formers to tell their story and point to the downside of extremism is considered of particular use for this objective as the target group often perceives formers as a credible source to deconstruct extremist messages⁵⁰.
- **Thirdly, a major issue is that many projects can be characterized as one-off initiatives with a limited reach, scale, and duration, which reduces the potential long-term impact of the interventions⁵¹.** Instead, P/CVE projects need to communicate the message continuously and in multiple formats⁵². There is a discrepancy between the duration of the radicalisation process and its effects compared to how much time P-CVE projects run.

Finally, although not a major theme in the literature, the lack of systematic evaluation and thus strong evidence of what works hinders the implementation of efficient P/CVE interventions.

⁴⁸ Interview with Academic

⁴⁹ Jones, M. & Freear, M. (2021): Consolidated Overview Paper: Lessons Learned From Strategic Communication and Alternative and Counter Narrative Campaigns; RAN (2022): Event Conclusion Paper: Member states workshop; Jones, M. (2020): Through the Looking Glass – Assessing the Evidence Base for P/CVE Communications

⁵⁰ Tuck, H. & Silverman, T. (2016): The Counter-Narrative Handbook; interview with Academic

⁵¹ Jones, M. & Freear, M. (2021): Consolidated Overview Paper: Lessons Learned From Strategic Communication and Alternative and Counter Narrative Campaigns; RAN (2022): Event Conclusion Paper: Member states workshop

⁵² Interview with Academic

3. Evaluation findings

This chapter presents a summary of the findings of the study. It is structured according to the evaluation criteria used as part of the evaluation framework in this study, namely: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coherence, EU added value and Sustainability.

3.1. Relevance

This section looks at the objectives of the intervention and assesses how well it reflected, and still reflects current and future needs. This section is structured into sub sections which seek to assess the relevance of the CSEP funded projects both in terms of their role in contributing to the objectives of CSEP, as well as meeting the needs of the audiences which the campaigns aimed to target.

Box 1 - Key findings relating to the criterion of relevance

The objectives of the individual CSEP funded projects were found to be strongly aligned with the general objectives of the CSEP. However, this was primarily because the general objectives of the CSEP being relatively broad and accommodating to different interpretations (i.e. in terms of campaign designs and scope). The degree of relevance of the specific objectives was found to be less than the general objectives of the CSEP, primarily due to the specific objectives being perceived as overly ambitious and challenging to address within the scope and resources available to CSEP funded projects.

The majority of CSEP funded projects were found to have implemented communication activities that were relevant to their target audiences. Several campaign approaches adopted in CSEP funded projects were found to have been evidenced in the literature and stakeholder consultations as being particularly important to ensure the relevance of communication activities, but not all CSEP projects actively sought to ensure/increase the relevance of their communication activities.

3.1.1. Relevance of the CSEP funded project objectives towards the objectives of the CSEP programme (EQ 1)

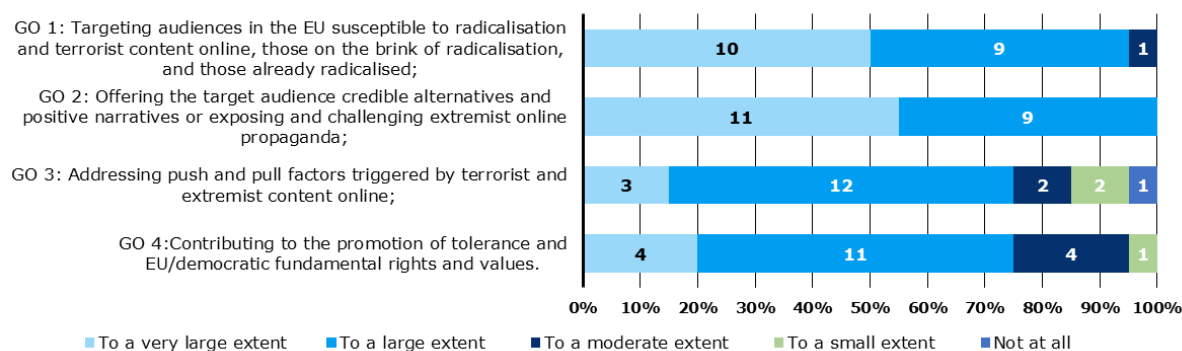
Relevance towards the general objectives of the CSEP

This first section explores the degree of alignment between the objectives of the CSEP funded projects and the general and specific objectives of CSEP, as presented in the glossary at the start of the report.

The analysis of the CSEP funded projects found a strong alignment between the project goals and the general objectives⁵³ of the CSEP. Based on the review of project documentation and interviews with project staff, the objectives set out across all 20 funded projects were assessed as being relevant to contributing to the general objectives of the CSEP (as shown in Figure 3 below). This was found to be particularly the case for the second general objective to “offer the target audience credible alternatives and positive narratives or expose and challenge terrorist and extremist online propaganda”.

⁵³ General objectives included: [1] Address target audiences in the EU susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online, those on the brink of radicalisation as well as those who have already been radicalised (target audiences' perceived or real grievances should be addressed); [2] Provide the target audience with credible alternatives and positive narratives or expose and challenge terrorist and extremist online propaganda; [3] Address push and pull factors of terrorist and extremist content online; [4] Actively contribute to promoting tolerance and EU/democratic fundamental rights and values.

Figure 3 - Extent to which each of the CSEP project objectives correspond to the CSEP general objectives (n=20 projects)



Source: Elaboration by the Contractor based on the scorecard analysis.

This finding is not surprising as each of the calls for proposals stated the need for applicants to present a methodology for a campaign which is aligned with the general objectives of the CSEP. In fact, in several instances, the objectives of some of the projects were found to be identical to the CSEP objectives. Thus, in those occasions, the relevance of the project objectives is high, however it also implies that no considerations were made for how the project objectives could be tailored to the specific campaign activities.

That being said, the CSEP objectives of addressing the push and pull factors of terrorist and extremist content online and promoting tolerance and EU/democratic fundamental rights and values, were found to be reflected in CSEP projects, but to a lesser extent than objectives one and two. This was either due to the project materials making no reference to the two objectives, or there being inadequate evidence to suggest that these two objectives had been fully realised in the campaign activities.

Interviewees also held mixed views on the relevance of the CSEP objectives. Across project and EU level interviews, there was a general consensus that the general objectives of the CSEP were too broad. However, two main points of view emerged.

Interviews at the project level suggest that the general objectives of the CSEP were broad, allowing for flexibility and innovation. Based on project level interviewees, the broadness of the CSEP objectives provided a certain degree of flexibility in the way they could be interpreted in campaign designs. Thus, the general objectives of the CSEP were seen to be relevant in encouraging innovation in campaign designs, something that was noted to be challenging when it came to other sources of funding. This broadness was suggested to be important, with the general objectives of the CSEP being seen to provide a large scope for projects to be relevant.

Interviewees were also of the view that the broadness of the CSEP's general objectives made it very challenging to judge success, not only of individual projects but of the CSEP as a whole. For example, the first objective relating to addressing target audiences in the EU was found to raise questions, primarily from EU level interviewees, on how target audiences should be defined and whether the chosen target audiences are indeed the most relevant to be targeted. While these questions are valid, insights from the contextual analysis (see Appendix 3) highlighted the complex nature of the radicalisation process and the absence of common pathways among those becoming radicalised, which subsequently challenges the identification of target groups, and the development of tailor-made prevention strategies. Thus, while the objectives of the CSEP could be perceived to generate ambiguity in terms of their interpretation and application, the objectives could also be seen as relevant in that they reflect the ambiguous ecosystem in which it operates within (i.e. the absence of common pathways to persons becoming radicalised).

Relevance towards the specific objectives of the CSEP

Mixed views were expressed on the relevance of the specific objectives⁵⁴ of the CSEP, notably on the perceived level of ambition and feasibility of each of the specific objectives. EU and project level interviewees pointed to the specific objectives of *bringing about behaviour change dissuading the target audience from promoting terrorism and violent extremism*, and *halting radicalisation and recruitment processes*, as being highly ambitious and challenging to achieve as part of campaigns that may only have a duration of one to two years. This view was partially challenged by some EU level interviewees who noted that it often depends on the scope of the projects. For example, for the objective to halt radicalisation and recruitment processes, if projects were able to have a strong impact at the local level, then this objective can be considered entirely achievable. However, expanding this objective to the EU level creates a much higher, if not impossible, level of ambition that few (if any) projects would realistically be able to achieve within the time and resources available through CSEP funding.

Moreover, for the objectives to *grow civic engagement and take an active stance in democratic processes* as well as to *enhance (digital) resilience and critical thinking of the target audience*, both EU and project level interviewees found them to be relevant in strengthening the work carried out in the P/CVE field in the EU. However, it is questionable whether these objectives are truly specific to CSEP and in line with the original intentions of the programme, and indeed DG HOME, considering the work of other DGs which fund similar types of work (i.e. DG JUST, DG COMM, DG EAC and DG EMPL), (see section 3.4 for further analysis related to the coherence with other EU initiatives).

Further considerations on the CSEP objectives

The objectives of the CSEP were also perceived by a small number of interviewees to not be fully aligned with the work of DG HOME. This concerned the objective of contributing to *promoting tolerance and EU/democratic fundamental rights and values*, which were perceived by the interviewees to possibly be stronger competencies of other Directorate Generals (DGs) of the European Commission, such as DG EMPL and DG JUST.

It is worthy of note, that the Commission work programme for 2017 and the financing for Union actions within the framework of the Internal Security Fund, included the following aim of the CSEP:

“The objective is to address the sharp rise in extremists and terrorists use of the internet. To support the production of online alternative/counter-narratives, their dissemination and monitoring by civil society organisations.”

(European Commission, 2017. C(2017) 6343 final⁵⁵, p.8)

Thus, considering the original aim of the CSEP (shown above), the development of the objectives in the calls for proposals may have gone beyond the intended scope of the programme. In this respect, there was a view, primarily from EU level interviewees, that the relevance of the programme would be strengthened through a narrowing of the scope and level of ambition of the objectives.

⁵⁴ Specific objectives included: [1] bringing about behaviour change dissuading the target audience from promoting terrorism and violent extremism and/or using violence; [2] growing civic engagement and taking active stance in democratic processes by target audiences; [3] halting radicalisation and recruitment processes and [4] enhancing (digital) resilience and critical thinking of the target audience against terrorist and extremist propaganda on-and offline.

⁵⁵ European Commission. (2017). Annex 1: Commission Implementing Decision concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2017 and the financing for Union actions within the framework of the Internal Security Fund – the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management. Brussels, 27.9.2017 C(2017) 6343

3.1.2. Relevance of the individual communication activities towards the identified target audiences (EQ 2)

The majority of CSEP funded projects were found to have implemented communication activities that were relevant to the identified target audiences, though their broad scope explains this to a degree. Overall, 16 out of the 20 projects were found to have implemented relevant communication activities, while four projects were found to only have partially relevant activities for the target audiences. For these four projects, either the chosen communication activities would have been more relevant for other target audiences, or the chosen target audience did not sufficiently engage with the campaign activities. However, it is worthy of note that the scope of the defined target audiences had an impact on this finding. Analysis of the scorecard assessment found that 14 of the projects set target groups which were assessed as being broad (e.g. “youth” or “those vulnerable to radicalisation”). Of these 14 projects, analysis identified that they tended to operate with communication activities which were relevant to the target groups. This is not to say that this approach is effective or not (which will be assessed under effectiveness in Section 3.2), but rather a larger scope for the chosen target audience had an increased chance of the communication activities being relevant.

Several campaign approaches adopted in CSEP funded projects have been evidenced in the literature and stakeholder consultations as being particularly important to ensure the relevance of communication activities, but not all CSEP projects actively sought to ensure/increase the relevance of their communication activities. Evidence from the contextual analysis (Appendix 3) suggests that the *identification of alternative narratives was considered more viable compared to counter-narrative approaches*⁵⁶. This is supported by documentation from RAN which further identified alternative narratives as being a more relevant approach to addressing target audiences that may be susceptible to radicalising content online⁵⁷. Moreover, an overarching finding from the project level interviews was the relevance of alternative narratives in communication activities in activating and engaging with target audiences. This was found to be particularly relevant when paired with interactive/ engaging communication activities (e.g. youth involvement in content production) compared to 'reactive' content (videos etc.). Analysis from the scorecard assessment of CSEP projects uncovered that 15 out of the 20 funded projects included messages that were preventative in nature to a large extent, while four were to a moderate extent and one to a lesser extent. These results imply that the majority of CSEP funded projects included messages that sought to address prevention rather than de-radicalisation, including elements such as counter-stereotyping, alternative account of events and emotional advocacy. This underlines the relevance of the individual communication activities towards the identified target audiences.

Moreover, evidence from the contextual analysis (Appendix 3) points to the *importance of P/CVE campaigns tailoring interventions to the specific, hyper-local target groups to ensure their relevance*. In particular, this included the need for P/CVE activities to show a deep understanding not just of the demographics of the target groups, but also their interests and concerns. In other words, the relevance of P/CVE interventions to their target groups depends on a granular and contextual understanding of the issues and parties at stake. This finding was confirmed by EU level interviewees who emphasised the complexities or identifying the most relevant target groups, and the impact this has on the rest of the campaign activities. The scorecard assessment found that the majority of projects had a

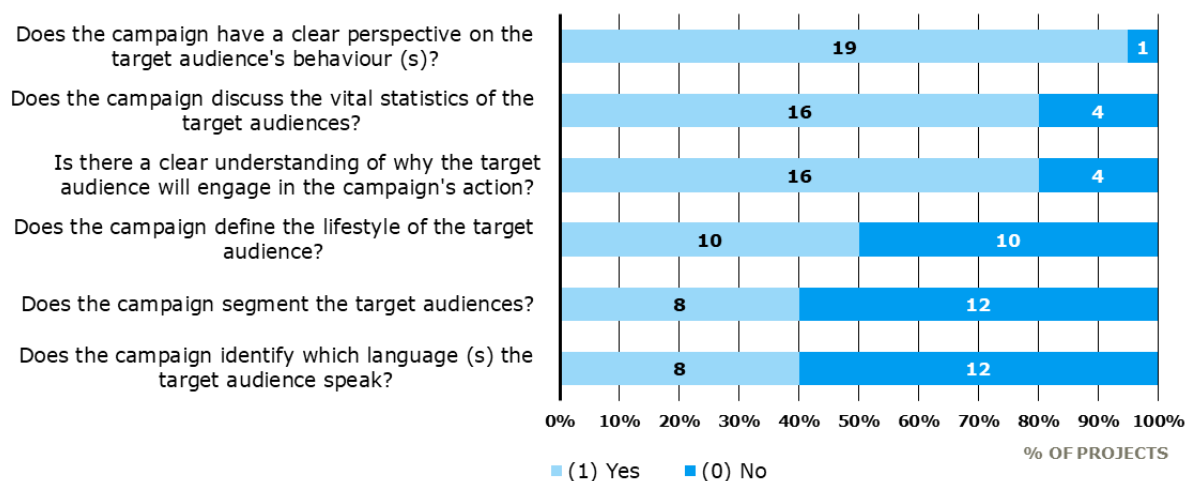
⁵⁶ As a point of definition: Counter-narratives can be considered as being reactive in nature, while an alternative narrative will start more positively, pro-actively and independently from its own values and its own framework.

⁵⁷ RAN Network (2016). Lessons Learned: What to do and what not! Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/document/download/47ce08f6-28bd-48b6-8f36-c52c090fef39_en?filename=efd-radar_lessons_learned_0404_clean_en.pdf

good understanding of the target audiences' behaviour(s), their key characteristics and of how they will engage with the campaigns communication activities (as shown in Figure 4).

Furthermore, project level analysis uncovered that in almost all CSEP projects, in-depth research into the characteristics and demographics of the target audience was conducted, which tended to lead to much more tailored communication activities. Thus, this was seen to increase their relevance (see examples of this under the benchmark "*Tailoring messages directly to the known characteristics, context and needs of the target audience*" in section 4.24.2).

Figure 4 - Analysis from the scorecard assessment on the knowledge of the target groups (N=20 projects)



Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

Only four projects were found to have changed their primary target audience in the implementation phase after having completed in-depth research on their target audiences. In these four cases, the most common reason for the change was due to the initial target audience being very broad and not specific. In these instances, a mixture of research and testing on the target meant that the target audience was able to be adapted and refined.

The RAN guidance on the GAMMMA+ model sets out the need for campaigns to invest enough money and time in the design phase of the campaign to include *research, piloting or testing and reiteration before launching the campaign*⁵⁸. Evidence from the scorecard analysis found that less than half of CSEP projects refined and tested the campaign material and communication activities with the target audience ahead of the campaign launch. The scorecard assessment also found that only nine projects tested the messages of the campaign with the target audiences before including them in the campaign's assets. In looking to understand why some projects included testing and some did not, evidence from the scorecard analysis outlined that projects which had included this element as part of their proposal methodology were more likely to have conducted testing activities. Indeed, many of the projects which did not test materials did not include this testing component as part of their proposal methodologies. Thus from the inception, testing was not foreseen, despite the guidance received from the RAN network, which could be the result of a number of factors, ranging from a lack of awareness/understanding of its value to limited ability/expertise to implement it. These findings suggest that further testing could have had the potential to increase the relevance of the funded activities.

⁵⁸ See best practices to GAMMMA+ from RAN here: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/e17c3ad5-7f9c-42eb-a1be-68c43ed53e65_en?filename=ran_cn_academy_creating_implementing_effective_campaigns_brussels_14-15112019_en.pdf

Finally, the literature also underlined the importance of incorporating holistic approaches in campaign activities through integrating online and offline activities. In total, 17 funded projects operated with online and offline activities, while only three had exclusively online activities. Out of the three which only had online activities, there was no evidence to suggest however, that this had an impact on the relevance of the communication activities towards the target groups. This assessment suggests that the individual communication activities had a high degree of relevance towards their target audience.

The inclusion of offline activities was found to often enable CSOs to spread their communication activities and approach to other practitioners working “on-the-ground” and among their target audiences. Several instances of this were found, for example in projects which included capacity building activities and training for CSOs on the best approaches to tackle terrorist recruitment process or personnel online, specifically within their own local contexts. Project level interviews, in tandem with evidence from the scorecard, noted that offline activities were also a highly relevant activity towards the identified target audiences.

However, it was often the pairing of (offline) training activities with online campaigns that enabled a more holistic and relevant approach in engaging with the identified audiences. This finding is not surprising however given that CSOs, which participated in CSEP training events in the programme’s inception, were encouraged to develop both online and offline activities.

3.2. Effectiveness

This section explores the effectiveness of communication actions carried out by CSEP funded projects by looking at the extent to which the programme achieved its objectives and what the factors are driving and hindering success at the programme level as well as the level of the individual campaigns. The current assessment is based on information from the scorecard and the interviews, while findings of the campaigns testing are under development and will be incorporated in the final report.

Box 2 - Key findings relating to the criterion of effectiveness

The CSEP programme aimed to address the target audience in the EU susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online, provide the target audience with credible alternatives and positive narratives, address push and pull factors and support grassroots CSOs in the Member States to utilise online communication tools and platform to counteract terrorist and extremist content online.

The individual CSEP-funded projects made a contribution to building capacity within CSOs by delivering several training and empowerment activities to counteract terrorist and extremist content. However, the analysis revealed that there was a gap between the level of ambition of the programme and what individual-funded projects could possibly achieve. When it comes to addressing target audiences susceptible to radicalisation and to providing them with alternative narratives, the main results of the projects at the level of target audiences found that most projects had a clear vision about the target groups to address, messages to deploy, messengers and channels to use to prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism, but encountered difficulties in actually addressing them in the implementation phase. Where individual projects also succeeded comparatively less was tailoring the messages with testing the messages before the campaign launch, and co-designing the messages with the target audience. This led to mixed results in projects' ability to achieve the intended impact by the end of the projects.

The assessment shows that when it comes to partnerships, including partners in the consortia who have previous solid expertise in the area of P/CVE as well as strong digital communication experts is highly beneficial to the effectiveness of the projects. Similarly, when CSOs were deeply engaged from the design to the implementation of the project, their crucial role of proximity with the target audience greatly contributed to projects' objectives. Size-wise, larger consortia of over 10 partners were at risk of struggling with streamlined and effective communication, collaboration, and implementation during the projects.

3.2.1. Effectiveness of the CSEP programme and projects (EQ 3-7)

This section assesses the effectiveness of CSEP, looking at the degree to which the objectives of the CSEP programme were achieved and whether/how the projects funded contributed to this. The analysis is based on the desk research, as well as interviews. When drafting the draft final report, the testing of CSEP projects' assets with target audiences was ongoing.

Achievement of CSEP objectives

The CSEP intervention logic revolves around four objectives:

- 1) address target audiences in the EU susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online;

- 2) provide the target audience with credible alternatives and positive narratives or expose and challenge terrorist and extremist online propaganda;
- 3) address push and pull factors of terrorist and extremist content online;
- 4) support grassroots CSOs in the Member States to utilise online communication tools and platform to counteract terrorist and extremist content online.

The projects made a clear contribution to build capacity within CSOs delivering several training and empowerment activities. However, when it comes to addressing target audiences susceptible to radicalisation and to providing them with alternative narratives, the main results of the projects at the level of target audiences found that most projects had a clear idea at the proposal stage of their audience they wanted to target, but encountered difficulties in actually addressing them in the implementation phase. Moreover, it is hard to assess whether CSEP projects were overall able to address push and pull factors of terrorist and extremist content online, considering that they are broad enough to cover several areas, which contributed to the lack of clarity of whether results have been achieved also due to generally poor monitoring and evaluation efforts.

The analysis revealed a generalised misunderstanding of whether projects could focus only on capacity building of CSOs or whether this objective should have matched with actual communications campaigns triggering attitudinal changes within the target audience. According to the CSEP programme's objectives and the call for applications, CSOs were not the intended final beneficiaries of CSEP but were a vehicle to promote behavioural change. Nonetheless, the majority of offline activities implemented by all CSEP-funded projects had planned and implemented train-the-trainers, workshops multiplier events for the CSOs to raise their capacity in responding to P/CVE challenges. For example, in the OPEN project, CSOs played a critical role in delivering the campaign activities, disseminating the communication assets, and engaging local community members in capacity-building activities. Several projects organised capacity-building actions for the CSOs to empower them in combatting radicalisation and extremist narratives at the local level.

Capacity-building activities appear to have been successful in all the projects intended to empower CSOs or the direct target groups of community members and individuals. The assessment shows that the projects had a strong focus on capacity-building actions, and the projects' monitoring and evaluation efforts confirmed the positive results of such actions. But there is limited evidence on the extent to which these workshops, training, and train-the-trainers have a long-lasting and behaviour-changing effect among the intended target audience. In some cases, project-level interviews showed that CSOs were actually the only ones targeted by the project activities. The OPEN project, for example, intended to target Muslim youth of specific areas of Europe. While the ultimate beneficiaries were indeed meant to be individuals of certain communities, the activities only targeted CSOs and schools and there is no evidence as to whether there was an impact of such activities on the youth.

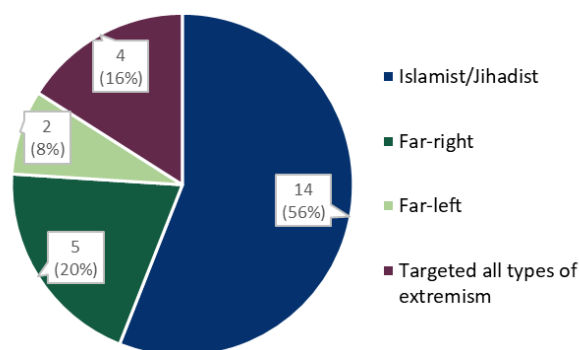
The role of CSOs in CSEP projects varied from being members of the partnership (10 out of 20) to mere project stakeholders (16 out of 20). When CSOs were deeply engaged from the design to the implementation of the project, their crucial role of proximity with the target audience greatly contributed to the project objectives. So, **involving CSOs throughout the project phases helped achieve the project objectives.** In OLTRE, for instance, the CSOs involved had a fundamental role in making sure the target audience was duly selected and engaged, counting on their already established trust-worthy relationships with the target group and therefore easy access to it. Whatever their formal role was, CSOs played a strong role in all projects used as multipliers of the project and campaign results and linking points between project consortia and target audience.

With regard to the first two CSEP objectives, namely addressing individuals vulnerable to radicalisation and providing them with alternative/counter narratives, the evaluation team highlighted that **only six out of the 20 projects actually managed to address their target audience effectively**. Conversely, eight out of 20 did not manage to reach the audience that they set out to approach (either at proposal stage or at a later stage), while in five cases the team was unable to develop an assessment. The latter situation occurred when the project team did not provide evidence to make the assessment possible or when the target audience was too generally defined, 'e.g. the youth', and/or not properly segmented so to make the assessment irrelevant. It is also worth stressing that all projects that included radicalised individuals as part of their target audience could not eventually reach them with project activities.

As it results from the contextual analysis, push and pull factors to radicalisation are many, and CSEP objectives did not specify which the projects were to prioritise. Likely, this objective was intentionally broad to stimulate project teams' creativity and allow projects to consider local sensitivities and challenges. This, however, makes assessing the achievement of such an objective difficult as one can argue that all projects sufficiently touched upon them. Nonetheless, evidence shows that **the narrow focus of given projects helped them to reach the intended project goals**. The fact that projects had broad and ambitious goals made it more difficult to achieve them within the given framework or to target a specific group, geographic area or type of radicalisation.

The evidence showed that **narrowing down the selection of the push or pull factors to be addressed by the campaigns made the difference in being effective**. This mainly happened in the research phase where a more granular perspective on the target audience could be explored. Some projects managed to have a specific focus, such as Breaking the ISIS Brand, GAMER, OLTRE and this contributed to achieving the project results. Some other CSEP projects, such as CICERO and DECOUNT, addressed several forms of radicalisation and target groups which appears to be overambitious considering the specificity of the push and pull factors required to address different types of extremism and radicalisation. The different types of extremism which were targeted within campaigns are displayed in the figure below.

Figure 5. Overview of target audience characteristics and type of extremism addressed across CSEP projects

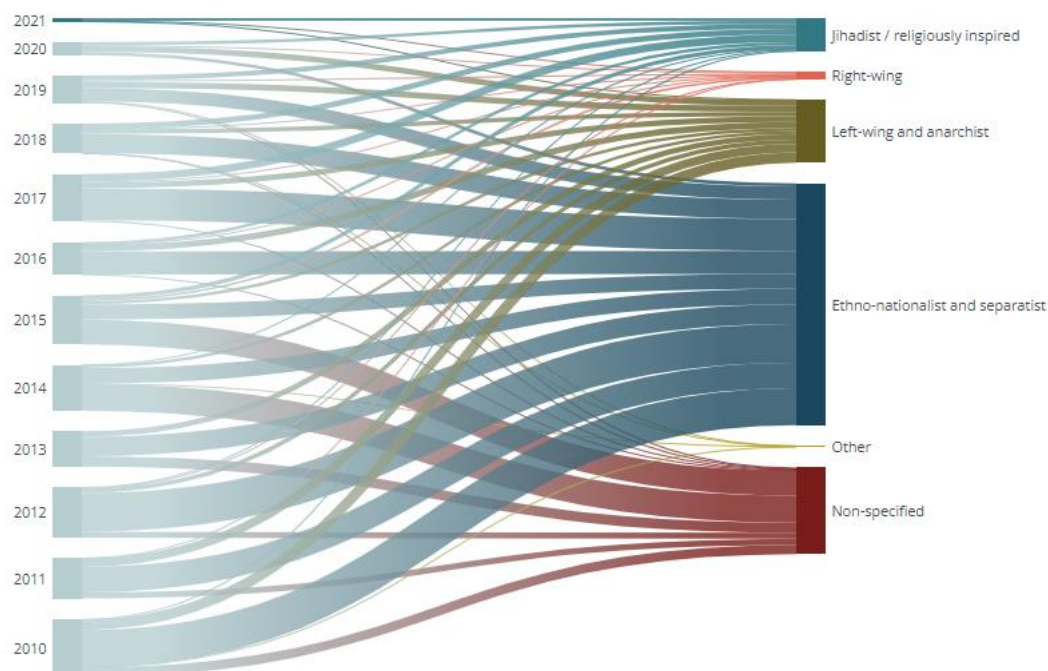


Source: Elaboration by the Contractor based on the scorecard assessment

The evaluation uncovered that the majority of projects had a strong emphasis on tackling religious radicalisation, in particular Islamist radicalisation. Therefore the direct beneficiaries (target audience) could broadly be seen as the Muslim community members. Only a few projects planned to tackle political radicalisation or single-issue radicalisation. Projects that aimed ambitiously to address several forms of radicalisation still had a strong focus on religious radicalisation. However, desk research found that Islamist radicalisation is one amongst many others that lead to extremism. The figure 6 below presents the number of terrorist attacks in the EU between 2010 and 2021. The figure includes completed, failed and foiled attacks and are broken down by year and by type: jihadist / religiously inspired, right-wing, left-wing and anarchist, ethno-nationalist and separatist, other and non-

specified. As the data suggests, the religiously inspired is less prevalent than attacks inspired by ethno-nationalist and separatist ideas. This questions whether the choice and focus on Islamism radicalisation was strategic and well justified by the programme and projects.

Figure 6 Terrorist attacks in the EU by type (2010-2021)



Source: Europol's annual EU terrorism situation and trend reports (from 2011 to 2021)⁵⁹

On the conceptual level, several projects did extensive research to map and understand the target audiences, but at least in one case (DECOUNT) it is unclear whether the project reached the same group intended in the design stage.

Both the scarce segmentation of audiences and the overambitious inclusion of many push-pull factors as part of the projects' objectives could potentially be explained by the difficulty encountered by many projects in striking the balance between keeping the activities at a hyper-local level while ensuring that the projects attained a European dimension. As literature shows that hyper-locality is a success ingredient for P-CVE campaigning, all projects tried to develop activities reaching critical areas or audiences in the EU. At the same time, the cross-border nature of CSEP (respected by all except one project) is at odds with maximising the projects' effectiveness. Unless consortia can count on multiple equally well-grounded partners in different EU countries that hold a similar level of understanding of the target audience, developing the same P-CVE campaigns across different countries risks failure to achieve effectiveness.

Similarly, the approach of including in the consortia networked organisations of medium to big size that have different branches across countries risks to ultimately affect effectiveness: while they can ensure an easier campaign's cross-border penetration, relying on them would penalise small associations that are likely to be more resonant within niche target audiences. With less capacity and resources, smaller associations represent the ideal recipients of capacity building activities under CSEP. Demanding single projects to counter EU-wide phenomena in providing activities across different countries implies outsourcing to

⁵⁹ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-events/main-reports/eu-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report#fndtn-tabs-0-bottom-2>

those projects to reach a scale of intervention that can only be achieved at the programme level, and in partnership with other national projects concurring to national strategies.

CSEP projects' ability to achieve behavioural change

CSEP projects were also expected to 'contribute to bringing about behavioural change dissuading the target audience from promoting terrorist and violent extremism and/or using violence' (Calls for proposal 2017 and 2018). However, few projects envisaged behavioural change as the goal of their action and the weak monitoring mechanisms implemented by most projects make it difficult to assess whether an actual attitudinal change within target audiences resulted from CSEP projects. Evidence showed that **only half of the projects had a theory of change**, with only the half of those having successfully defined it in a detailed and actionable way. Only 6 out of 20 projects had a clear idea on how to measure the campaign results, and follow-up activities to monitor the persistence of targeted behaviours were implemented by a quarter of the projects.

However, the performance assessment across all 20 projects shows that projects successfully reached and sometimes overachieved the key performance indicators (KPIs). This includes mainly online user statistics. An example of such a case is the project Breaking the ISIS Brand, which achieved some indicators as campaigns received 7,217 reactions, 1,140 comments, 1,530 shares, and 878 saves. Even though the project had a specific focus, it is not evident that the achievement of the KPIs entailed behavioural changes reversing the appeal of violent extremism as an answer to social, political, and personal problems. While established KPIs measure clicks/likes for posts online (measures of performance), they do not measure the overarching goals of the projects, such as capacity building and triggering behavioural change (measures of effect). Project-level interviews with Breaking the ISIS Brand and other projects confirmed that they found it rather **difficult to translate effective online activities into successful offline results**, and that anyway it is difficult to measure how online interventions impact on offline behaviours.

On the contrary, **some projects went beyond measures of performance and tried to assess behaviour change**. For example, in project YouthRightOn, the project team identified changes in behaviour when comparing the results of the Diagnostics study (carried out before launching the campaign) to an online survey carried out as part of the final evaluation. One of the changes was registered in the willingness of youth to report aggressive/hateful online content (a 10-fold increase, 66% compared to only 6% before the campaign; comparability limitations apply due to the different methodologies (online vs face-to-face)). While the extent of behavioural change cannot be accurately fully analysed, the results of the evaluation of YouthRightOn indicate that there was some change in attitudes in the short term.

Contribution of online and offline activities towards the CSEP objectives

Observations were made in the interviews with project team members about the importance and role of offline activities. In the majority of projects, offline activities were planned and foreseen as an integral part of the communication campaign. Project-level interviews confirmed the observation that even if the core action of the projects was an online campaign, offline activities were seen as complementary to online campaigns. Offline activities were mostly aimed to empower civil society organisations and further engage target groups/community members at the local level.

During the project-level interviews, some project teams pointed to the inability to conduct offline activities due to the **COVID-19 pandemic**. They perceived this as a limitation of their efforts as they could not accelerate the meaningful engagement with the target audience or start building trustworthy relations with the target audience which would allow for the interventions to be effective. This argument is sometimes used as a justification for underachieving some project goals in some cases, such as CICERO. In other cases, like

for OPEN, the beginning of the pandemic coincided with the start of the activities or anyway heavily affected the timeline of the project. In these cases, a readjustment of the activity plan was necessary to cope with the restrictions. However, such a readjustment did not lead the project to the completion of its objectives in every case. In the case of OPEN, for example, CSOs were slow in adjusting to the new situation and these caused delays in implementing the planned activities. It is hard to draw general conclusions on whether projects rightfully claimed COVID-19 as a justification for underperformance. Certainly, the impossibility to establish offline interactions at the outset of the project may impact on the success of the whole project insofar as it does not allow for trust to be built between project stakeholders and target group. Nonetheless, COVID-19 has also been an opportunity for those working in the online space, profiting from a greater online exposure of their targets. Similarly, CSEP projects with a sufficient level of structural flexibility could adapt to the new circumstances and turned to an advantage the limitation of offline interactions.

The assessment of the projects' activities highlighted a different conceptual understanding of what communication campaigns are. In projects where there was a strong focus on offline activities, the project teams tended to understand the communication campaign as a dissemination effort rather than a standalone online campaign, targeting and engaging vulnerable individuals. Project-level interviews revealed a general misconception of communication campaigns, far from the comprehensive concept of strategic communications as a tool to influence behaviours. The scarce recurrence of behavioural change metrics to monitor the performance and impact of campaign confirms this misconception.

Most projects included CSOs training or capacity building activities in their activity plans. While they are eligible activities under CSEP, they are not communications interventions. They might nonetheless fall within wider strategic communications efforts as long as their impact on behaviours and attitudes is measured and evaluated – which was not the case for most CSEP projects. Projects that mainly relied on this sort of activities, however successfully, cannot be considered to have achieved CSEP objectives, unless they were able to demonstrate the impact of their interventions on the ultimate target audience.

The evaluation also studied the difference in the effectiveness of projects funded in 2017 and 2018. The overarching assessment based on the project scorecard aimed to identify possible common trends amongst projects that received funding in 2017 versus 2018. Out of the 20 projects, 12 of them had received funding in 2017 while the remaining 8 had received funding in 2018. Based on the project scorecard assessment, **evaluation concluded that the projects with 2017 grants were more effective as they scored higher for almost all elements.** The difference is specifically more emphasized in the goals element with 2017-funded projects having an average score of 8.4 out of a maximum of 13 points whereas 2018-funded projects have an average score of 6.4. The majority of the projects with 2017 grants had a theory of change (8 out of 12) while only 2 of the 2018-funded projects had a theory of change (RAGE and GAMER).

Audience targeting was another element that was more effectively addressed by projects that were funded in 2017 although CICERO and PRECOBIAS campaigns that were funded in 2018 were also effective in targeting. Between 2018 funded projects only CICERO had a clear perspective on the living conditions of the target audience as demographic research was conducted about the target audience which is people at risk of Islamist, far right/left or single-issue radicalisation. Another difference in audience targeting between 2017 and 2018 funded projects was audience segmenting. 75% of the 2018 funded projects segmented their audience compared to only 33% of those that were funded in 2017. Between 2018 funded projects which segmented the audience, CICERO used the same message for all segments of the audience whereas some others such as DECOUNT and (Re)think used different activities for different target groups.

Post-campaign testing showed that the communication assets did not deliver the outcomes intended by the projects. The assets were effective only when disseminating

the positive alternative and counter-narratives and were less successful in bringing about the change intended by the CSEP program or individual funded projects.

Findings from the post-campaign testing suggest that the audience intended to be targeted by projects would not stop scrolling online to view the assets. The target audience in the majority of tested projects was young people, and the results show the first images of videos, posts, and images would not motivate them to click on content and view it. As mentioned, some communication assets achieved a strong level of success in vanity metrics such as likes, shares, and comments.

However, the post-evaluation suggested that few would have played or watched the video content in full, especially if those assets were too long or not intriguing/off-putting. This questions whether the individual-funded projects could deliver the change they promised. No matter how clear and powerful the messages were in the communication assets, there is no effect if the target audience does not view them.

When simulating the online environment for the target audience and asking them to view the assets fully, the evaluation found that some short and engaging **assets prompted a discussion on attitudes, and participants questioned their perceptions about the topics addressed in the asset.** Evidence suggests that the assets were effective as a starting point for discussion, but it is not confirmed that these assets defined the nature of the discussion and whether they aligned the prompted discussion with the project's goals. In this regard, the critical question is that if content prompts debate – either online or offline – how CSEP-funded projects can ensure that the ensuing debate is healthy and is in line with the sentiment of the campaign, rather than imposing at risk of it to counter to the campaign.

This is directly linked with another finding about behaviour change. The evaluation found that assets **triggered little action**, which was the case when communication assets' **call to action wasn't clear**. Online content strongly affected those with strong opinions on the topics they want to defend, which can further entrench their beliefs. The assets were more powerful in reinforcing existing attitudes rather than changing them. Findings suggest that emotionally-charged messages can very likely make the target audience overwhelmed and prevent their engagement with the content.

These findings is yet another evidence to question the effectiveness of the communication campaigns using similar communication assets to dissuade citizens from radicalisation.

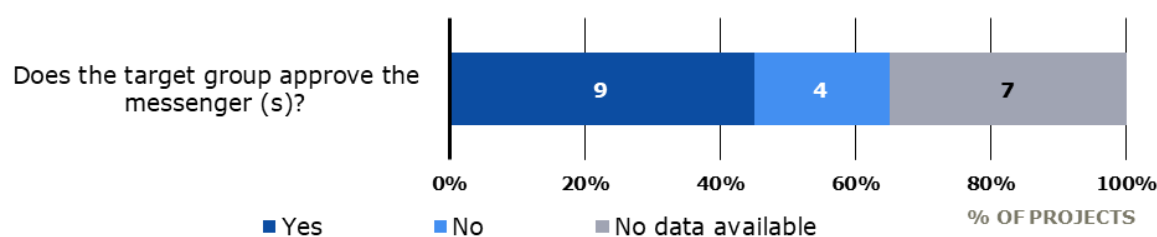
3.2.2. Effectiveness of the project composition, design and approaches (EQ 8-10, EQ 21-26)

This section presents the key findings relating to the effectiveness of the project composition, design and approaches. Overall, this section presents answers to EQ 9 on the lessons learnt and the best approaches stemming from the projects analysed under this assignment, EQ8 on the consistency and effectiveness of the approach of conducting campaigns stemming from the analysed projects, as well as EQ26 on the success of consortia in tailoring the project to the context. Chapter 4 on conclusions and lessons learnt further elaborates on these points. Further, this section elaborates on the findings on the M&E frameworks implemented by the project consortia (EQ10) and the composition of the consortia (EQ21-25). These findings have been drawn from the desk review of CSEP project documentation and feedback from interviews with the CSEP project teams and EU level interviews.

Firstly, the projects indicate that ensuring the credibility of the project campaigns for the target audience was an important factor in reaching the target audience (see EQ26 on success of consortia in tailoring to context). To achieve this, credible messengers who appear authentic or relatable to the target audience, such as influencers or community members (e.g. teachers), are important factors, as the evaluation reveals.

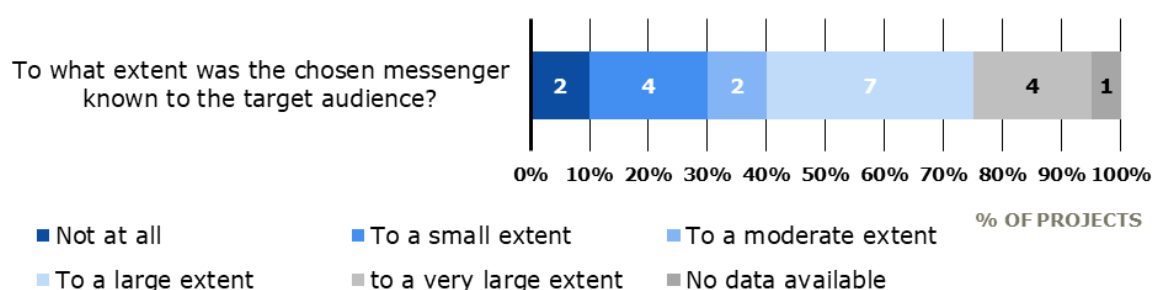
Project RVIEU noted that building trust with the target audiences is conducive to achieving the project goals. Furthermore, the evaluation found that CSOs and local communities were used as amplifiers to bring the project assets closer to the target audience and incite action among them, as project (Re)think points out. Regarding this point, the analysis shows that in many projects (9 of 20) the target group indeed approved the messenger of the campaign, however in many other projects (7 of 20) clear information about this point was not collected which is presented in the figure below. Furthermore, the extent to which target audiences knew the messenger varied from project to project, showing mixed results. Notably, in many projects (7 of 20), the target audience was familiar with the messenger to a ‘moderate extent’, as displayed in the figure below (Figure 8 and Figure 9).

Figure 7 - Overview of approval of messenger by target group



Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

Figure 8 - Extent to which target audiences were familiar with messengers



Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

Research to tailor the project and campaign design is a key step to ensuring that the campaigns are engaging to the target groups. Having experience in the thematic area of the project and deeply understanding the target audience through interviews in the design phase of the project enables consortia to identify specific push and pull factors. This enabled project teams to gain important knowledge on how to create an effective campaign and communication assets. For instance, in the project Breaking the ISIS, the project team interviewed former ISIS members, which helped them design engaging counter narrative videos (e.g. the campaign’s most popular video on YouTube has over 2 million views and almost 3,000 comments). However, it is important to note that solid research on the target audience is not the only pre-determinant for a successful campaign; additionally, projects should ensure that, following the research, the target groups are not defined in a way that remains realistic.

For instance, project CICERO had a clear idea of who to target and why at the conceptual level, but was ambitious regarding the number of different groups targeted. The defined target groups in project CICERO were very different both in terms of political and religious orientations, which made it difficult for the project team to target all groups with tailored messaging. Therefore, a campaign’s effectiveness can be enhanced if it is supported by a solid conceptualisation of the target group while at the same time focusing only on a limited number of target groups.

Moreover, the analysis found that setting up quality control and pre-or post-testing steps enhances the development of tailored campaigns, for instance through an advisory or quality control board which discusses and approves the campaign content before it is launched, hence minimising unintended consequences. The project Extremely EUnited set up an advisory board of academics, a cleric, a religious expert and an expert on radicalisation and terrorism. The advisory board assessed the online content before it was posted, and as a result some content was not approved. Further, co-designing or pre-testing the communication assets with the target audience is also regarded as facilitating the design of the campaigns. In the project DECOUNT, the target audience was involved during the entire process of designing the asset (a video game), including testing the pilot. The project team adapted the video game based on the target audience's feedback, allowing for an enhanced level of effectiveness of the asset. The project Oltre l'orizzonte also relied on members of the target group to co-design and tailor the project activities. It also selected and trained a group of moderators among the target audience that would moderate social media content.

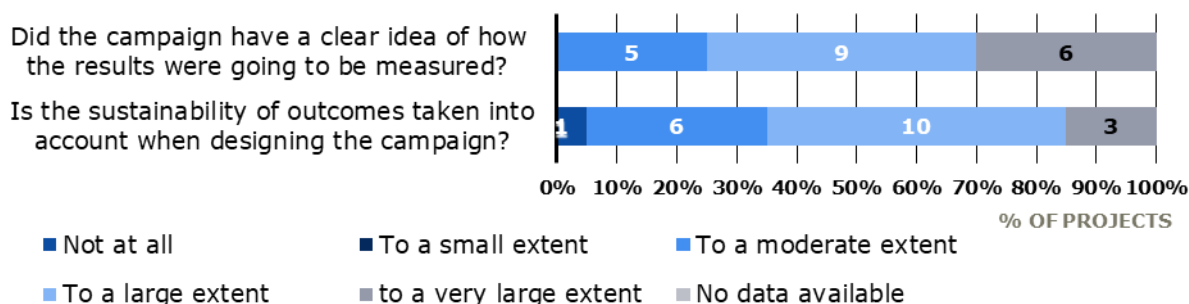
The analysis shows that a complementarity of online and offline activities in the campaigns was considered important for effectiveness among project teams. This is supported by the finding that 18 of 20 projects combined both online and offline campaign activities.⁶⁰ The assessment also concludes that staying local with offline activities, while relying on a consortium partner with a strong background in online communication, online campaigning and advertising for the projects' online campaigns can enhance effectiveness. This finding is supported by exemplary evidence from project DOBT which considered offline components valuable drivers of immediate impact for the target group which an online campaign alone could not have achieved.

Adaptability and flexibility in the project design makes projects more resilient to changing realities. Many of the projects experienced challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their project design had not accounted for external risks such as COVID-19, eventually forcing them to slow down the project, re-consider and substantially change the design in the middle of the project. The CICERO project team reported that the campaigns were largely dependent on offline activities, with a smaller online component, however with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic the project team had to move the majority of the planned campaign online. This led to substantial changes in the project objectives, design and the way that the project team members collaborated with each other. Hence, using a solid risk management system and a methodology that is well-determined from the start, but at the same time adaptable, can help mitigate risks.

Research to respond to EQ10 on the common findings and potential lessons learnt from the M&E components of the projects analysed shows that a strong M&E framework supported both the monitoring of the implementation and results of the projects and can be considered a good practice. Having a consistent and systematic M&E framework in place from the very start of the project and applying it consistently throughout the entire project lifetime is a success factor, particularly since it is impossible to measure and assess the results and impacts of the campaigns without an adequate M&E framework, including a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The results below show that most project consortia had taken into account the measurement of campaign results as well as the long-term impact of the campaign (sustainability) to a 'moderate extent', to a small extent' or to a 'large extent' (Figure 9).

⁶⁰ Based on analysis of project fiches

Figure 9 - Overview of project design M&E



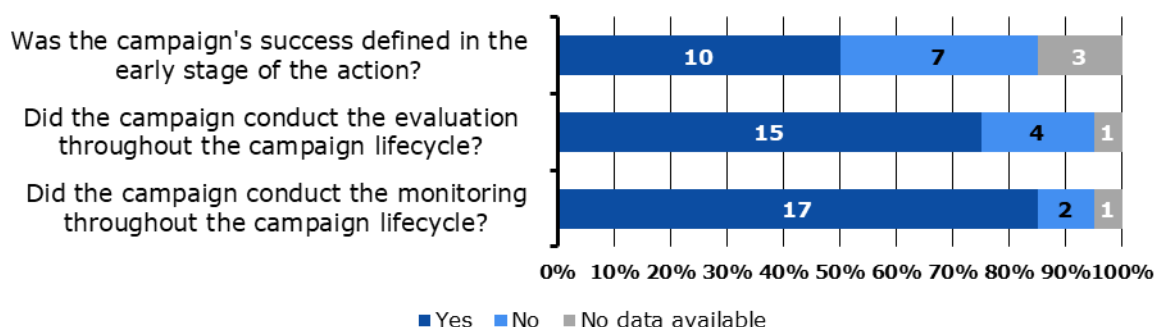
Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

These results underpin the finding that reporting as part of M&E should not only focus on providing information about the different actions completed under the different Work Packages of the projects but also on the results and sustainability/impacts of the implemented actions. The projects funded by CSEP took varying approaches to measuring their actions and impacts. For instance, project CICERO divided its KPIs by production, dissemination, awareness, engagement, and evaluation instruments. While this approach is relatively comprehensive, it does not include the effect of the messages and the effect on the targeted audience online.

To assess the extent to which a project can prevent radicalisation, these two indicators would provide valuable insights. By contrast, the project GAMER consortium developed a large volume of KPIs and divided them by project-level, results-level, and campaign/asset-level⁶¹. Other projects, such as Breaking the ISIS, developed very detailed KPIs which, for instance, focused on capturing the target audience’s interaction with the produced communication assets, including 15-second views, 45-second views, complete views, number of reactions, number of comments, number of shares, and number of saves.

The findings below further demonstrate the performance of the project consortia in defining what success means at the onset of the action as well as their continuous monitoring and evaluation activities throughout the project. The results show that the majority of consortia conducted continuous monitoring and evaluation throughout the project. By contrast, only 50% of the consortia defined the campaign’s success in the early stage of the action (Figure 10).

Figure 10 - Overview on defining the campaign success in the early stage



Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that the vast majority of consortia carried out the M&E internally (13 of 20), while 5 of them conducted both internal and external M&E and none of

⁶¹ Project GAMER differed from many other projects in that it focused on producing only one asset – a video game – rather than a series of assets, such as YouTube videos or Instagram posts.

the consortia conducted only external M&E.⁶² This, coupled with insufficient organisational resources to guarantee objectivity, shows the high risk of bias among the M&E results for the projects, since the consortia themselves monitored and evaluated their own performance and impact. Finally, for the majority of projects (17 of 20) there is no clear evidence on whether the campaign allocated 5-15% of the project budget for the campaign M&E to ensure adequate funding for M&E and quality results.

Monitoring the campaign content dissemination with Facebook or Google Analytics or Power BI worked well in terms of ensuring that the content is disseminated. The project COUNTERACT used these metrics analytics tools to measure interaction in order to better understand which audiences respond to the disseminated content. Based on these analytics, project COUNTERACT found that the people responding most to the project's call to action were using Facebook. However, it is unclear from the collected data whether project COUNTERACT in fact adapted its strategy and produced better results over time.

Regarding the cross-border element of the consortia, an analysis of the project fiches reveals that over 50% of the consortia were organisations from different countries, relating to EQ25 on the on success of cross-border collaborations. The results show that, despite many organisations choosing cross-border consortium partners, keeping projects at the local level enabled a closer engagement with the target groups of the campaigns. CSOs on the ground can help build a connection with target groups to ensure that the content created for the campaigns is tailored towards these groups. For example, it was mentioned in an interview about the CICERO project that there was a need for hyper-localisation to reach target audiences. This recommendation to keep projects local was also made by the RAN⁶³. By contrast, the added value of the cross-border element of the consortia setup depended on the individual needs of each project. While some project consortia found that the cross-border aspect enabled a meaningful exchange of knowledge and capacity building among the consortium partners (e.g. Breaking the ISIS project), interviews with other consortia did not particularly highlight the added value of the cross-border element (e.g. project OPEN).

The findings also show important insights regarding the type of organisations most successful in reaching target audiences (EQ21) and how organisations could most effectively complement each other within a consortium (EQ22) as well as shortcomings in terms of the consortium arrangements (EQ23) (see Appendix 2). Firstly, previous experience in the field and strong communications expertise were considered conducive to projects' effectiveness. Project designs from organisations/consortia with experience in the same activities were deemed to have the most effective project designs due to their previous experience in the field. Observations also revealed that involving communication experts from the private sector can improve the effectiveness of the communication campaigns, since they have a solid understanding of the market. The table below presents an overview of projects which have highlighted the involvement of private sector communications experts. Further, project partners of COMMIT also brought forward the point that an interaction between consortia at programme level would have helped them discuss and exchange views and solutions on issues that are common among several project consortia, e.g. advertising hurdles on Facebook or developing purposeful psychological triggers in the communication assets.

Table 2 - Overview of projects which involved private sector communication experts

Project name	Description of involvement	Type of involvement
CICERO	Social media and communications expertise provided by Inoftron Europa. The issue,	Consortium partner

⁶² In two cases, the data is not clear on whether the project consortia carried out internal, external or both types of M&E.

⁶³ Interview with RAN on 18 August 2022

Project name	Description of involvement	Type of involvement
	however, in this case was that the involvement of Inoftron Europa was only foreseen during the design stage and not the implementation stage of the project.	
Breaking the ISIS Brand Narrative	Analytics support provided by Facebook. Facebook, however, was not directly involved in developing or advising on the message, campaign, etc.	Collaboration through partnership that ICSVE has with Facebook
YouthRightOn	On-going monitoring by Intelday (the social media campaign – metrics etc.) and by external advisor (Facebook expert).	Consortium partner (Intelday), external support (Facebook)
PRECObIAS	Planned support by Facebook for dissemination of campaign on Facebook. Facebook, however, did not implement promised support to the project.	External support
Project Grey	Big Data analysis support directly from Facebook.	External support
ONarVla	Support to development of digital strategy with regard to communication activities by We Are Digital (subcontracted).	External support
GAMER	Specialist support to developing education entertainment video games by Grendel Games.	Consortium partner

Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

The table shows that an important challenge to overcome when involving digital communications experts is ensuring that these experts are involved in the ‘right tasks’, i.e. ensuring that they are not only involved in the design stage of the campaign but also during the implementation. While some projects strongly involved communications experts to design, disseminate, and monitor the campaign, such as project OnarVla and YouthRightOn, other projects primarily used them for analytics support for the monitoring of the campaign performance, e.g. Project Grey.

Moreover, the analysis substantiates that including a partner in the consortium who has expertise in P/CVE enhances the effectiveness of the campaigns, as they have deeper insights into the subject matter and can advise other consortium partners on key issues and how to define and approach target audiences. For instance, both project (Re)think and RESET provide strong evidence that subject matter experience and ‘in the field’ knowledge of P/CVE are important elements of an effective consortium composition.

Evidence shows that including a partner in the consortium who is specialised in M&E and solely focuses on M&E provides added value to monitoring effectiveness. Multiple consortia highlighted the added value of a dedicated team of experts conducting M&E. For example, in the project Oltre l’orizzonte the evaluator helped the project team navigate challenges encountered in the project implementation. However, it is important to reduce the number of partners working on M&E to avoid a ‘heavy’ M&E process, as project Extremely EUnited, which had engaged a consortium of various M&E partners to conduct the assessment, noted. Moreover, it is also a good practice to ensure that the evaluator is an external organisation to guarantee that the evaluation is as objective as possible. In the case of project OPEN, the project coordinator and the project evaluator were one and the same

organisation, which, coupled with insufficient quality controls, creates the risk of bias in the evaluation.

The size of the consortia can determine the effectiveness of the collaboration between consortium partners. Relying on very large consortia can cause (mis)communication and collaboration issues, while a smaller project partnership has the potential for higher efficiency, as (Re)think and Extremely EUnited project partners pointed out. Extremely EUnited consisted of 14 partner organisations and reported struggling with efficient coordination and administration, and misalignment in their views about which types of online content should be produced as part of the campaign.

In sum, to further answer EQ24, the findings show that an effective consortium structure would consist of a smaller number of partners, including highly valuable expert organisations in P/CVE and experts in digital communications and campaign dissemination. Additionally, consortia should take into account engaging an external evaluator to assess the effectiveness of their campaign efforts in an objective manner. Regarding the cross-border element, depending on the needs and design of the project, a collaboration between partners across border can bring added value to the projects.

Box. 1. Results of the post-testing of campaigns on campaign design

The post-testing results show that different assets had different impacts - some prompted discussion, others prompted self-reflection and others an emotional response. There was no one consistent approach nor one consistent result.

Relevance of the communication asset is relative. A message needs to have personal relevance in order to stimulate re-evaluation of one's own attitudes and behaviours. If it is perceived to be relevant to everyone, this encompasses personal relevance. But if it lacks personal relevance, the message will not land with the audience, and could possibly stoke blame apportioned to other population groups who are seen to be "at fault". Therefore, project teams should be very conscious of this factor when designing a campaign and tailoring it to the defined target audience.

In addition to relevance, consistency is key success factor. The results show that project consortia should be strategic and consistent about which behavioural triggers they aim to address (e.g. specific emotions, rational thinking)

Further, project consortia should consider tailoring and streamlining campaigns to the gender(s) of the target audience. The results have shown that, while some assets appeal to all genders, some create unintended sentiments among certain genders. For instance, female empowerment messaging was received with resentment or anger by a small group of male post-testing participants in Italy. Therefore, there should be a consistent approach and awareness of the gender context of the target audience.

Finally, the content needs to be designed for an individual country: a one-size-fits all approach across countries may not be effective.

3.2.3. Effectiveness of the project messages (EQ11-15)

This section provides an assessment of the interventions' effectiveness regarding campaigns messages and messengers. In particular, the desk research looked into the deployment of messages in the campaigns and the extent to which the messages used by the projects were distinctive, clear and influential on the target audiences. While mapping and selecting the communication assets for the post-campaign testing, a complete set of communication materials produced under the CSEP projects was reviewed. The following points present the main findings that originated from the research. These findings have

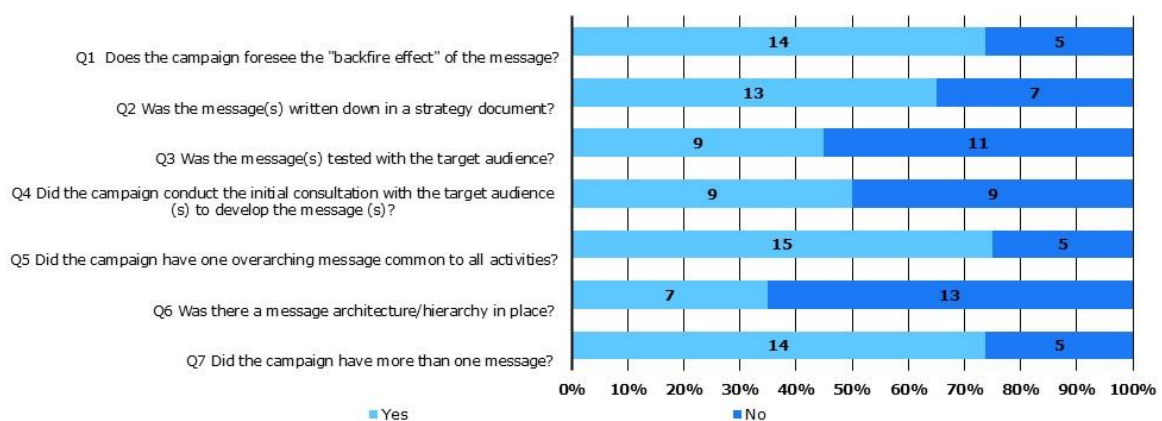
been drawn from the desk review of CSEP project documentation, feedback from interviews with the CSEP project teams and EU level interviews, and the post campaign-testing of selected individual funded projects.

The final evaluation showed that the CSEP-funded projects developed messages based on research and direct consultations with the target audience, but results were mixed on the extent to which these efforts translated into tailored messages. An understanding of the target audience was important to comprehend how the messages, messengers and mediums were tailored to bring the intended change to the target audience of individual projects. Projects allocated significant resources to study the target audience carefully, and the final scorecard assessment also demonstrates that most of the individual funded projects performed well in some elements of creation of right messages for the right target groups. However, the assessment showed a difference between the creation and delivery of these messages, and a disconnect between knowledge of target groups and tailoring the messages. **Individual-funded projects were neither successful in using research on target audiences to deliver messages that would meet their intended project goals, nor in developing them based on the coherent interaction with those target audiences.**

As pointed out in the relevance section (figure 4), data from project-level interviews and the scorecard showed that the projects had a clear perspective of the target groups and their behaviour. Vital statistics on the target groups were identified in almost all the projects. Each of the projects conducted desk research on the target audience; this was generally one of the project work packages in the grant agreement. Even with this in mind, the assessment showed that **only 10 projects fully grasped the data on the target group's lifestyle, segmented them, or identified the language they speak.**

Regarding tailoring the messages, as demonstrated in Figure 11 below, the majority of the funded projects managed to think through the messages and write them down in the communication strategy documents. 15 funded projects implemented campaigns with one overarching message, meaning that there was an overall logic of how deployed segmented messages were delivering the intended results of the campaign. Following the GAMMMA+ methodology, it was important to have a single overarching message, although in some projects multiple messages were used. Ones that deployed multiple messages without an overarching message in the campaigns (e.g., ReThink) aimed to reach several types of target audiences, so for some of these projects having a meta-message was not important. In those cases, the granular messages were more important than having a meta-message. In the design stage, most campaigns also foresaw the "backfire effect" of messages and put mitigation measures in place.

Figure 11 - The tailoring of the messages in the CSEP-funded communication campaigns



Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

These indicators show a certain degree of tailoring of the message, but several areas assessed during the evaluation also indicate areas where campaigns performed less successfully. Where projects succeeded less in tailoring the messages was:

- Creating the communication assets based on a clear message that would stimulate people's thoughts and feelings;
- Testing the messages before the campaign launch; and
- Co-designing the messages with the target audience.

As indicated in figure 5, the desk review found that **the majority of the projects' messages were not based on a clear logic that would stimulate people's thoughts and feelings.** This means that the messages were not built on logical archetypes such as start, storyline or direct call to action. Most importantly, messages developed were not translated into engaging online content.

The evidence from the desk review and interviews showed that only 11 projects tested the messages with the target audience before the campaign launch. Testing messages would have allowed projects to see which messages worked the best with what type of the target audience. It would have allowed to have an in-depth understanding on what worked and what did not, and provided guidance for revision and optimisation of the message, channels used, or the entire model of the communication campaign. Testing the messages with the target audience was usually done via online targeted tests and offline workshops. The same was observed with the initial preparatory work conducted by projects to carry out direct consultation with the target audience to design the communication assets.

The majority of projects did not co-design the messages with the target audience in the design phase. Projects did not have a strong element of co-creation or take a participatory approach when developing messages or communication assets. The campaigns were not based on messages that the target groups needed to hear, see or read to trigger intended behavioural or attitudinal outcomes.

The three gaps (clarity, pre-testing and co-designing the messages) identified above are important elements of communication campaigns. Without these three aspects in place, it can be argued that the projects did not develop systematically designed messages based on an understanding of the target groups. The evidence gathered on the projects also shows that there is a lack of knowledge on how the messages of online campaigns brought about the awareness, attitudinal or behavioural changes intended by projects. The findings discussed below regarding the creative content of the communications assets and results of the post-campaign testing of assets show that tested assets were relevant to the intended target groups when they watched or read them. However, it was not proven during the post-campaign testing that the target groups would stop scrolling and view the assets tested in a real-world scenario. This means that the projects managed to understand the type of messages needed to be created to reach intended groups and the nature of these messages, but faced challenges in delivering these messages to target groups.

This observation made during the evaluation is directly connected to the uptake of the GAMMMA+ model as a general best practice guideline given to individual-funded projects for their communication campaigns. The disconnect detected with the target audience, tailoring messages and triggering the intended outcomes are strong components of the GAMMMA+ model. Evidence from the scorecard analysis found that less than half of CSEP projects refined and tested the campaign material and communication activities with the target audience ahead of the campaign launch.

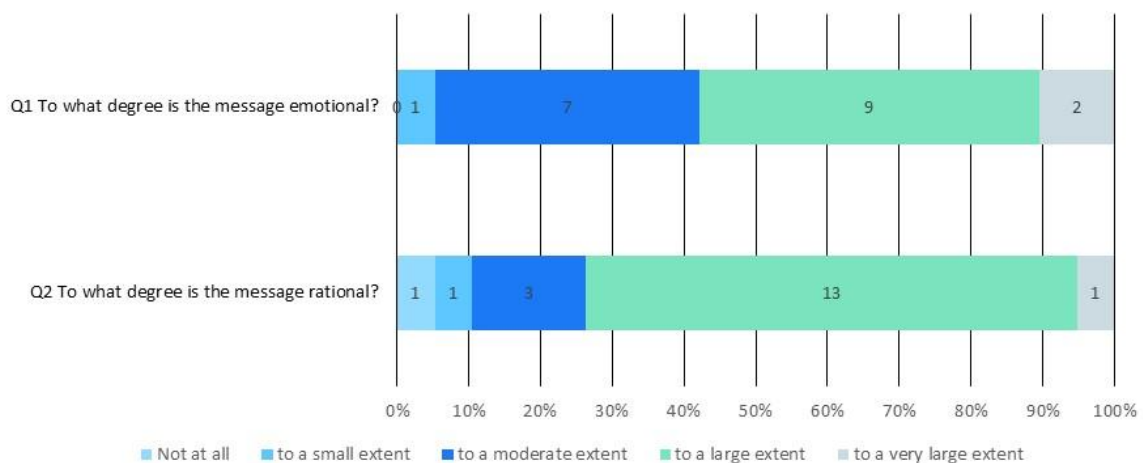
One of the reasons why the GAMMMA+ model was not fully used to develop coherent communication campaigns was that the model served as a reference point; there was no requirement to apply it. Moreover, as the findings on project consortia compositions suggest, not deploying it in the communication campaigns could be the result of given consortia not having the capacity to absorb and apply the communication campaign model,

detecting differences between more established CSOs, which would have more experience with such tools and the capacity to utilise such tool, and smaller, more grassroots CSOs, which may not have the capacity to implement the GAMMMA+ model.

When it comes to the type of messages deployed, the **assessment showed that projects favoured alternative positive messages in the communication assets over counter-narratives**. Based on the review of communication assets, evaluation found that the most communication campaigns focussed on positive alternative narratives rather than counter-narratives. The messages deployed included emotional aspects, such as empathy, a sense of community belonging, social inclusion, power of peace and citizenship. The contextual analysis shows that considering the push and pull factors, responding to or countering the grievances proves to be less effective. As projects have done extensive research in P/CVE field, their decision to use positive messages can be explained by a good understanding of the overall context of the field in question. An important finding here is that although positive messages were engaging, tailoring them to target groups was needed to amplify the meaningful engagement that triggered critical thinking and emotional appeal to its full potential (CICERO project). Post-campaign testing also demonstrated that alternative positive messages were understood more clearly and caused less confusion than counter narratives among intended target groups.

The findings showed that highly emotional content received strong engagement among online users, such as commenting and sharing. The desk review and scorecard assessment showed that the majority of the projects used rational messages in their campaigns to a large or a very large extent (by 14 projects off 20) and emotional messages were deployed by 11 projects in total to a large or very large extent.

Figure 12 - Type of messages deployed



Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

Desk review and interviews with the project partners concluded that the portrayal of personal experiences with emotional messages seemed more effective. Post-campaign testing found that projects that created emotionally charged communication assets generated a strong online engagement. The sentiments related to empathy, sense of belonging, support for community members, friendship and peace were mentioned by participants to be remembered in future. Assets with factual information were less engaging. According to respondents, the communication assets with more rational reasoning and factual information were among many others on the topic available online. That said, while emotional messaging was more engaging, if the emotional response was considerable and negative - such as emoting sadness or anger - this can act as a barrier to engagement if the audience do not want to feel that emotion, especially when they are, for example, scrolling through their social media feed for entertainment purposes.

Box 3 - Examples of the use of emotional messages in the campaign

In Breaking the ISIS, the campaign mainly built on emotion and relatability. The videos of personal narratives told by a person who experienced and witnessed the atrocities committed by ISIS, often with tears in their eyes, engages the viewer emotionally, pulling on their heartstrings rather than attempting to cognitively persuade them not to join ISIS through a logical, rational argument. Post-campaign testing confirmed that emotionally charged materials created by the Breaking the ISIS Brand project emotionally engaged target groups that the project intended to reach. Respondents felt sad after viewing the videos. However, finding a balance between overwhelming feelings and emotionally resonating content is an issue. Even if respondents clearly understood the message and saw the element of a call to action, they still believed it was sensitive content which they most likely would choose not to watch if they came across it online. Finding the balance between emotional resonance that calls to action and overwhelming respondents is something that experienced communication campaigners can contribute to.

In Oltre L'orizzonte, the message content was both rational and emotional as it included real-life experiences of the target audience. When it comes to the emotional side, the presence in the partnership of the communication agency was crucial to craft a product that was appealing, triggering and provocative. Furthermore, the theatrical piece and similar communication materials, being based on life stories and direct testimonies of situations of discrimination or exclusion, was of great emotional impact according to the final internal evaluation.

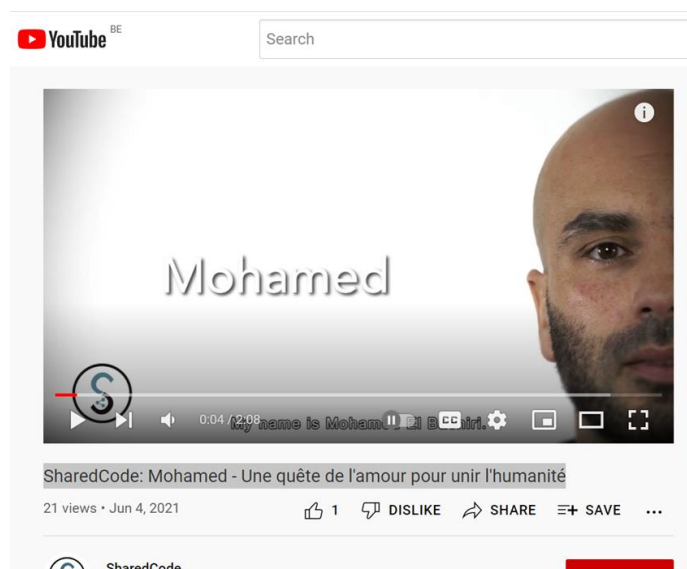
In Project Grey, the campaign used several strategies of which the value was proven by scientific evidence at the time. For example, the promotion of empathy and 'perspective taking' through role models was seen to reduce prejudice, negative stereotypes, and, thereby, the chances of intergroup conflict. In terms of social psychology, being 'grey' also meant that peoples' ingroup identification was not accompanied by outgroup hate. Having a respectful dialogue between people from different groups was found to be an effective method to reduce prejudice and prevent intergroup conflict. These strategies were evaluated throughout the campaign.

Analysis of communication materials in the scorecard shows mixed results regarding the creative content used in the campaign assets. Several projects managed to create content that was indeed able to stimulate people's thoughts and feelings. For example, according to the final evaluation of Breaking the ISIS, the content was appealing, and the messages were easy to grasp and not lost in the communication asset. Post-campaign testing of the Breaking the ISIS project also confirmed that assets were well-received well by intended target groups. Another example of creative content could be a website that informs users how 'share-worthy' news articles are online when you enter the link into the website, which D.O.B.T used to reach the intended results with intended groups. In these cases, the ideas were transformed into a logical call to action and target groups were invited to act rather than be in passive observer mode. However, a desk review of the project-level materials confirmed that most projects had a sound conceptual understanding of the target group and the type of messages needed to engage them.

When evaluating projects against GAMMMA+ model, 'audience' and 'message' elements across all 20 projects were also scored relatively high on the scorecard. At the same time, the results of analyses of the communication assets during the desk review showed that projects fall behind in executing the communication assets as they were envisaged. While testing the communication assets, it was found that the common communication assets were video profiles of individuals and community members. These messengers usually shared their personal experiences of struggle or stories of empowerment. In the majority of cases, these videos are long (more than 3-4 minutes), which might not allow users to

capture the key message and engage users online especially when social media users typically look for short-form content that engages in seconds. An exemplary case of a communication asset that showed less engagement is the profile video produced under the SHARECODE campaign (CICERO). The video presents the story of a community member 'Mohamed' from Brussels, Belgium, who shared his lived experience of losing his wife in a terrorist attack in Brussels. Even if the video is emotionally charged, the tone set in the asset is not engaging. The asset addresses the interviewer, not the target audience, which stands in contrast to videos that aim to radicalise target audiences. Furthermore, the asset only shows Mohamed from the front and torso upwards, and behind him only a plain, white background. Throughout the 2 minutes of the video, this visual setting does not change, which may cause the viewer to lose focus and withdraw attention from the video. The post-campaign testing also confirmed that respondents were not motivated to fully watch the profile videos.

Figure 13 - Screenshot of SHARECODE communication asset⁶⁴

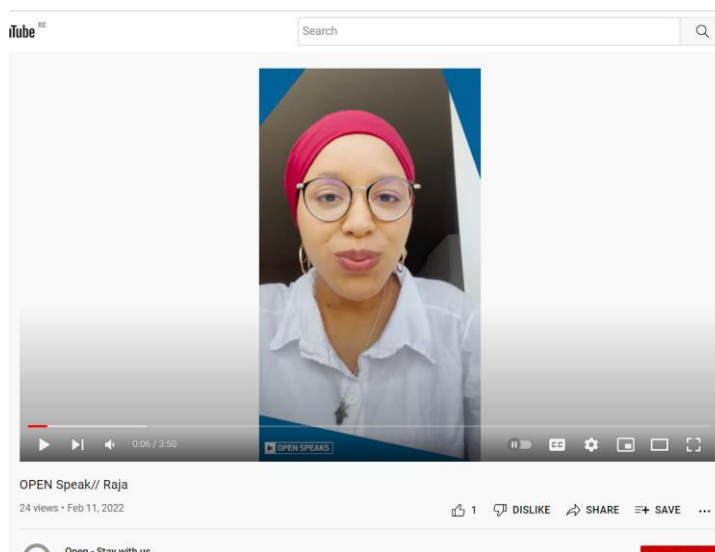


Another similar asset was created in the OPEN project, where the majority of communication materials are profile videos of either project partners or community members. Some communications assets are recorded interviews where messengers share their stories and experiences⁶⁵.

⁶⁴ An example can be found here - [SharedCode: Mohamed - Une quête de l'amour pour unir l'humanité](#)

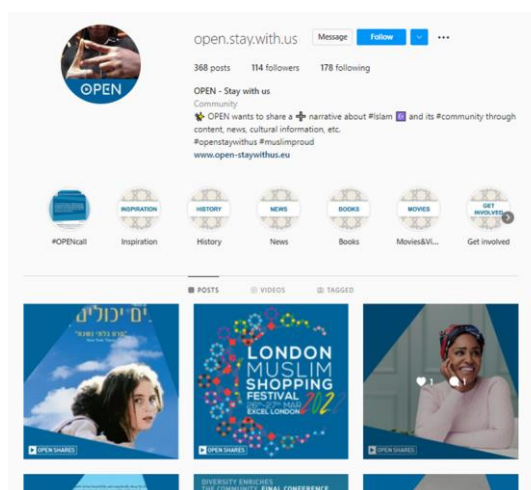
⁶⁵ An example can be found here - [OPEN Speak// Raja](#), [OPEN Speak// Zeynep Tenşi](#)

Figure 14 - Screenshot of Staywithus - OPEN Speak communication asset



In the OPEN project, communication assets on social media on Instagram also demonstrated limited meaningful engagement with the audience. While the images are colourful and visually attractive, there is no particularly meaningful message in the images that the target audience can engage with and comment on.

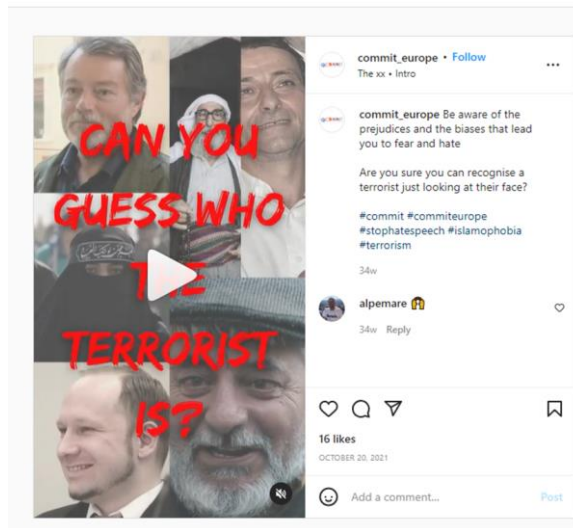
Figure 15 - Social media channel of the OPEN communication campaign



On the contrary, some communication assets showed a direct call to action with a concise message directed towards the viewer. In the COMMIT project, the communication campaign used short stories on social media platforms. In the following example, there is an apparent reference to prejudices around what kind of person is viewed as a terrorist, based on their looks⁶⁶. During the post-campaign testing, the observation was made that 33% of the participants reported interest in the asset, 25% felt confused following exposure to the asset, while 20% felt sadness. Even if the asset had a clear rational message, it still generated an emotional response – sadness. According to 38% of participants, the main message of the asset was “Terrorism is not about race and appearance”. Only 3% of the participants reported not understanding the message.

⁶⁶ An example can be found here [Commit europe -Be aware of the prejudices and the biases that lead you to fear and hate](#)

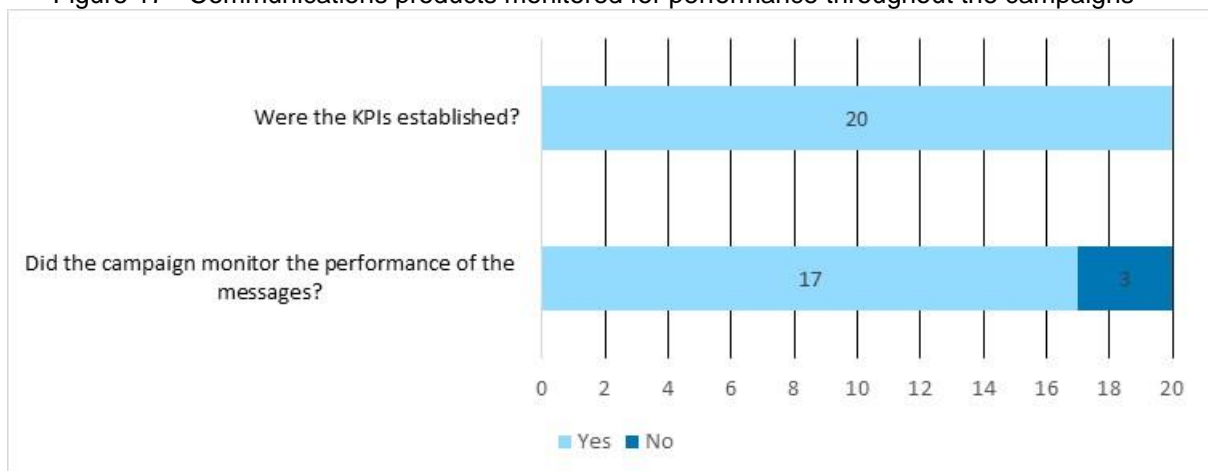
Figure 16 - Social media channel of the COMMIT communication campaign



When it comes to monitoring messages and communication products for performance throughout the campaigns, the desk review showed that project-related KPIs were established by all the projects. These KPIs were mainly related to the campaigns' performance and the target audience's online engagement, such as clicks, likes and reactions. The scorecard assessment and interviews with the project partners showed that these KPIs in the majority of the projects did not go beyond the performance targets. For example, it was proved that it was challenging to measure the long-term effect of communication messages on the target audience, especially when it comes to attitudinal or behavioural change where projects intended such change. Clicks, lots of comments, shares and saves shows that the communication assets had caused positive effect and were in line with what projects had promised but these KPIs shifted the key focus of the impact that projects aimed to achieve. It detracted from the meaningful measures of performance such as a behaviour change, triggering action or critical thinking.

However, observation shows the importance of prior research and regular monitoring and evaluation. Most of the projects conducted in-depth analyses of their target group's digital habits which proved to be very effective for creating messages, and choosing communication channels, mediums and messengers.

Figure 17 - Communications products monitored for performance throughout the campaigns



Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

Previous research and M&E on the effectiveness of mediums and communication channels was essential in knowing what worked best and what could be adjusted on the way. With such analyses some projects were able to understand how their target groups not only use

social media but how they consume information, their main sources, how they communicate and share their opinion in online platforms, what catches their attention and what triggers their engagement. All this information is considered essential for a successful campaign.

Moreover, projects using analytical tools such as Google Analytics, Facebook or Instagram insights (among others) were able to constantly reshape and adapt their content for it to have more reach and engagement – either while a campaign is still live online, or after each campaign has been delivered. For example, in the case of the Breaking the ISIS Brand Narrative project, each campaign was monitored and evaluated before the next one was run. The monitoring system was effective as it showed after the first campaign that it is better to use the same videos across countries rather than to distribute different videos in different countries. Therefore, prior research along with regular monitoring and evaluation allowed campaigns to have an exponential learning curve, shaping and adapting them far more adequately than others.

Box 4 - Results of the post-campaign testing of messages

The post-testing results show that different messages had different impacts - some prompted discussion, others prompted self-reflection and others an emotional response.

Two key success factors which are unequivocal is that the target audience should stop to watch the assets in a real-life scenario, so that they are exposed to the content; and that the messaging is clearly understood by the target audience. The content also needs to be perceived as relevant and relatable to the audience, so that they consider taking on board the message. When the messages were confusing to respondents it prevented them to relate and be further engaged. Relevance can be particularly effective when message were reflecting the audience's lived experiences. This lived experiences can be garnered by using local CSOs with local reputation and familiarity.

Messages that were telling respondents something new or that they have never heard before generated positive response from participants about the communication assets.

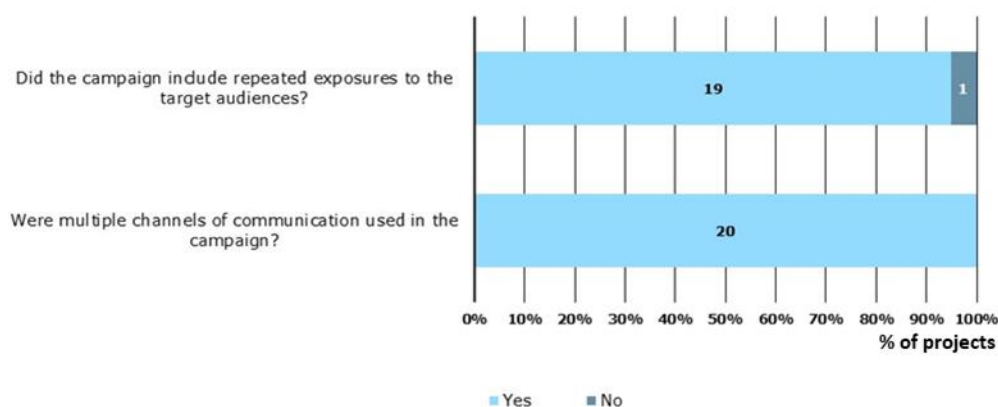
The results demonstrate that content is more likely to be effective if the audience engages with the content. Emotional messaging can be engaging - either eliciting positive (funny) or negative (sad) emotions. However, solely emotional impact is not enough to encourage interest and behavioural change. as the results show.

3.2.4. Effectiveness of the project communication channels (EQ 16-20)

The following presents the assessment of the effectiveness of the projects' communication channels used to achieve the set objectives. The analysis looked into the extent to which communication channels worked best to reach the target group, what were the most trusted and effective methods of communication and which factors contributed to the effectiveness of the platforms and the change in behaviour. These findings have been drawn from the desk review of CSEP project documentation and feedback from interviews with the CSEP project teams and EU level interviews.

Social media platforms proved to be the main choice for most of the projects due to the tools they provide in terms of reach, but the evaluation also identified limitations of these media. Social media platforms were the principal choice (apart from a website) for all projects. Indeed, Facebook (20), YouTube (19), Instagram (16), Twitter (13) and Tiktok (5) - (number of projects using the platform) - were used across almost all projects. The scorecard analysis showed that all the projects used multiple channels of communication in the campaign and included repeated exposures to the target audiences.

Figure 18 - Repeated exposure and number of communication channels used



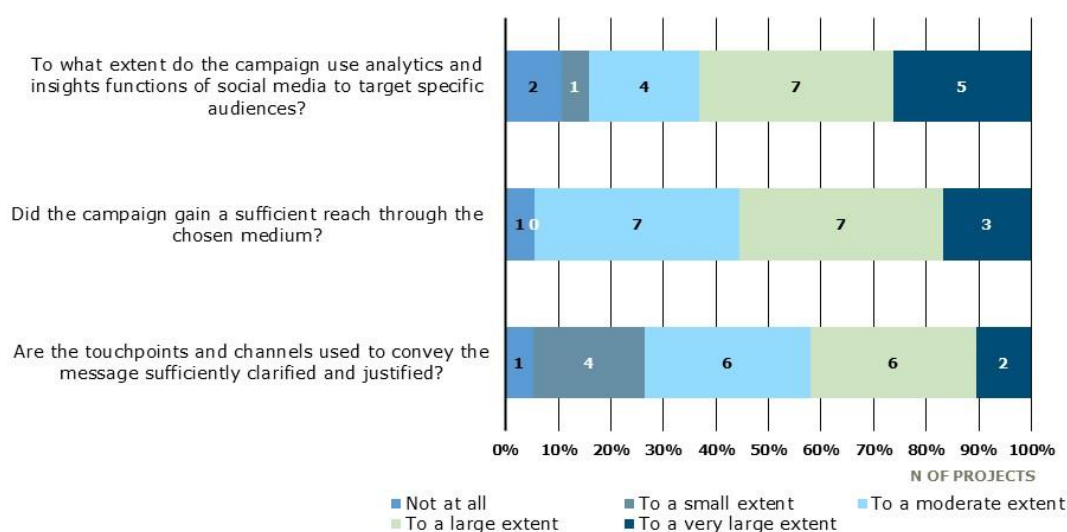
Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

Facebook and YouTube were predominant communication channels in the funded projects. The desk review of the campaign evaluation studies shows that the vast majority of projects considered Facebook (FB) as the most successful social media channel, reaching the target groups and engaging them online. Indeed, A significant importance these platforms have is the possibility of paid promotions which have a significant impact in terms of reach. For example, the CICERO project reached around 70 people per month and a paid promotion made that number skyrocket to 67K in a month alone on Instagram. In some cases, FB was used in combination with local influencers and vloggers to amplify the campaign's reach and effect (YouthRightOn).

The second most successful channel was found to be YouTube. But in the majority of cases, the projects used YouTube to store the videos and reshare and repost them on other social media channels. It was mostly used as a repository platform rather than a standalone channel in communication campaigns. Contextually, Facebook and YouTube had the largest number of users among social media platforms in 2017 and 2018 when the CSEP projects received funding. This also affected projects' decision to rely on those communication channels. From 2018 onwards, other social media channels such as Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter or TikTok grew faster than expected. However, **final assessment showed that the majority of projects did not clarify or justify the choice of touchpoints or channels.** This means that there was no clear logic behind the selection of the channels, and an in-depth analysis of the project materials also showed that there was no strong evidence gathered by a project to explain the choice of channels. All projects targeted relatively young people, therefore all target group analyses concluded that social media would be the best communication channel to reach them due to the fact that their digital habits and the way they consume information is almost exclusively through these platforms.

Most projects did not change their plans to reach their intended target groups through these newer channels. The desk review of the communication channels shows that the adaptability of projects to respond to this changing online environment could have helped to reach the right people in the right place. At the same time, the results showed that the campaigns did not gain sufficient online reach through the chosen channels. This also explains why the selection of channels was not based on a clear methodology. (Figure 13)

Figure 19 – Justification of medium choice and results



Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

At the same time, several campaign designers pointed out how Facebook allowed for targeted content through filtering by age range and geographic locations resulting in a more precise and focused dissemination and therefore more effective campaign. Indeed, there is a clear preference and dominance of Facebook (the only channel present in all 20 projects) and its strengths on improving targeting, reach and engagement are repetitively mentioned across projects. Tools like Facebook pixel made it possible to reach a higher and more defined profiling level of audience of interest. Moreover, additional advertising tools such as Facebook’s proprietary algorithm, allow to the identification of a group of people whose online behaviours and profile characteristics are similar to the target already detected. However, Facebook was also considered as one of the main campaign’s obstacles due to their checks and new content rules leading to several campaigns being blocked because of the nature of the content dedicated to such young target groups. For example, this was found to be the case in Breaking the ISIS, COMMIT, and OPEN.

Communication assets assessed during the post-campaign testing also showed that assets were mostly shared on the aforementioned social media channels, such as Facebook and YouTube. Testing with a similar audience to that targeted by the project showed that these channels were widely used. The target audience of the projects tested was within the age group of 16-25. The majority of respondents expressed that they primarily consume political content, entertainment and general news on social media and streaming channels (Netflix, Hulu, etc.). The survey among 1,500 respondents also showed that streaming platforms are popular among this target group (around 80% of participants). **This highlights the relevance of the channels used by CSEP projects, but also the need to adapt to the changing digital realm.** The benefit of putting content on streaming platforms extends beyond merely expanding campaign reach and frequency. Adverts on streaming platforms are often un-skippable, meaning that the audience is less likely to be able to ignore the content as they might scroll past it on social media.

Post-campaign testing also examined the appropriateness of the channels based on the most effective assets. Survey results showed that, on average, around 40% of intended target groups reported that they would probably stop scrolling online and watch the videos and posts demonstrated to them. For example, the testing result of the communication asset of Extremely EUnited showed that overall, participants seemed to think the video was appealing, as around 45% found the videos tested ‘rather attractive’. This also means that half of the respondents were not sure if they would stop scrolling, watch video and find it appealing. A large share of the respondents (47% in Netherlands and 63% in France) claimed it was interesting and only a smaller proportion felt the opposite. The remaining respondents were rather neutral in their responses (35% in Netherlands and 24% in

France). These results suggest that despite having caused interest, the levels of apathy or indifference are still rather considerable as the video caused mixed responses.

Post-campaign testing also showed that most participants were very positive about the likelihood of watching the video until the end if they had seen it on social media. They highlighted the reasons for this, for the tested videos of Extremely EUnited, as being that they “were short” and “capture one’s attention”. There was a different perception about the videos that were a bit confusing or emotionally overwhelming. The findings suggest the majority of respondents would not view overwhelming content online as it triggered negative and unsettling feelings of sadness and anger on social media. Furthermore, this would be at odds with their mood when scrolling through social media for entertainment purposes, and they could scroll past content eliciting negative emotions.

When testing the assets, the evaluation looked at the perceived relevance of the communication assets by the respondents both in the survey and in online communities. **The final analysis shows that only a limited number of respondents considered the messages relevant to them, and respondents were also not sure if they discovered or learned something new.** Relevance is an importance factor, so that the audience takes heed of the message and doesn't ignore it. When testing the communication assets of Extremely EUnited in the post-campaign testing survey, results showed that the video's message was only relevant to a negligible share of the respondents, given that only around 12% (on average for all tested assets) of the surveyed people totally agreed with the statement “the message is relevant to me”. Most respondents (an average of 30%) asserted being neutral regarding the relevance of the message themselves. Most of the respondents were either neutral or positive about the redundancy of similar posts online. However, around 30% agreed that they are tired of seeing similar posts. This was similar to the COMMIT project where respondents said that the asset was more relevant to them compared to the Extremely EUnited project (50% of participants)

Moreover, survey results showed that in the Netherlands only 16% ‘somewhat agree’ and 7% ‘totally agree’ that the video challenges the way they think about things. Indeed, most participants were either ‘neutral’ (32%) or negative (22% ‘totally disagree’ and 23% ‘slightly disagree’) about this. In France, the outlook was slightly more positive with 37% agreeing that their views were challenged by the videos (12% ‘totally agree’ and 25% ‘somewhat agree’), despite a sizable share (29%) stating that they feel ‘neutral’ regarding the issue addressed in the communication assets.

Evaluation findings show that offline activities fill the gap of low levels of engagement via online activities. Although social media proved to be effective in terms of reach, these platforms seem to be more challenging in terms of engagement. The final evaluation found that several projects point to the same observation of low levels of engagement of online campaigns. They consider that social media can help to catch someone’s attention, raise awareness, and give access to a certain piece of information to a large target group, but it is much more difficult to engage them only through online channels. Some of the projects consider that online activities should/could be considered more as a complement to offline activities rather than the other way around.

Projects observed that it is easy to make people see content but harder to make people engage with the content online. The constant and overloaded amount of information circulating online makes it hard to make the target groups focus and actively engage with the campaign, whilst offline activities are directly and exclusively targeted to intended groups and give them the tools and guidance to engage which is not obvious in online activities. Experts in local areas such as community or civil society organisations, and social workers, have access to a local network and more importantly an extensive understanding of local situations and community groups. With emphasis on hyper locality, offline activities proved to be effective and impactful.

An online alternative to this willingness of making offline activities prevail which proved to be effective and common ground, was the use of influencers and ambassadors: through

real people although online. Observations show that target groups' engagement increased with these kinds of influential figures in the media. Not only were influencers able to extend the reach and diversify it, but they made the target groups' engagement increase.

In total, 18 of 20 projects used the combination of offline and online activities. The assessment identified different categories of the projects pursued online, offline or a combination of these two for different reasons. Some of the projects (YouthRightOn, DECOUNT, CICERO) had a clear preference to engage the target audience and reach the project goals through offline activities as a supportive function to the online campaign. This preference was based on the idea that offline activities were an opportunity to facilitate an in-depth conversation with the local communities.

In DECOUNT, during the interviews conducted with members of the project team, it was acknowledged that isolated activities will not achieve behavioural change but that these activities had to be implemented in combination with offline activities. This opinion of the project members was confirmed by the evaluation conducted at the end of the project. It showed that when the video game was played in combination with a workshop that consolidated the contents of the intervention, participants were less likely to agree with statements expressing authoritarian attitudes after the workshop compared to before the workshop. According to the interviews, the CSEP call for applications was the reason why those projects choose to predominantly build their projects on the online component, but beneficiaries of funding had a clear preference for offline activities and its combination with the online campaigns.

Box 5 - Results of the post-campaign testing of messages

Most of the projects used a hybrid of online and offline approaches, which was reportedly particularly effective. Projects did not justify the choice of specific social media channels such as Facebook and YouTube.

Post-campaign testing showed that the target audience might view communication assets on social media, but only a limited number of respondents considered the messages relevant to them. In addition, emotionally-charged content was found to be less likely to be viewed on social media. Communication campaigns need to consider the type of content consumed by specific targeted groups and create assets that match their social media behaviour.

The post-testing results show that Facebook and YouTube were indeed the channels that the target group uses. However, the testing showed that the project's target groups also consume entertainment content and general news on streaming platforms (Netflix, Hulu, HBO, etc.). Expanding the channel mix into entertainment and streaming services could extend the reach and engagement of the target audience. Contextually, the advantage here is that streaming platform advertising is often un-skippable and the audience cannot ignore it, and thus engagement could be more significant.

3.3. Efficiency

This section is dedicated to the assessment of the criterion of efficiency at both programme and project level. It summarises different aspects of efficiency addressing all questions between EQ27- EQ32 (Appendix 2). The assessment of efficiency relies on a qualitative analysis based on the scorecard, as well as EU level and project level interviews.

Box 6 - Key findings relating to the criterion of efficiency

The ratio between costs and benefits in CSEP-funded projects was largely described as reasonable and proportionate by many participants in CSEP. The benefits of individual projects were described as the impact their projects had on the audience and in the field. The budget and resources involved in CSEP projects differed considerably. There is no clear relationship between the total costs and the effectiveness scoring, with some projects with more unique communication activities requiring more resources.

The Commission's administration and direct management approach was largely found to be an efficient and appropriate way to provide funding mainly because of a faster process than when involving intermediaries, as well as its transnational approach to P/CVE.

3.3.1. Ratio between the project level costs and benefits (EQ 27,29-31)

Members of CSEP-funded projects considered that the costs related to project activities were reasonable and proportionate to the benefits of the projects. The analysis of the interviews with project-level respondents based on their self-assessment of efficiency has shown a good level of confidence in the results achieved by individual projects given the costs involved. While one of the main benefits referred to be the impact the projects had on the target audience, it is worthy of note that the assessment of the effectiveness of the projects (see Section 3.2) suggests that while many projects reached their target audience, they were unable to/did not assess the actual impact of their projects on behaviour (Section 3.2).

No causal relationship was found between the cost of the projects and their effectiveness. To look deeper into the efficiency of projects, the study team assessed the relationship between the costs and benefits based on the scorecard analysis and found that there is no causal relationship between the scoring - which relies on the assessment of available project documentation in relation to the application of the GAMMMA+ model, assessing how well the projects used these elements in their communication campaigns – and project costs. Table 3 below lists all 20 CSEP projects in the order of the total costs incurred – from the highest budget to the lowest. The total costs include the budget received through the CSEP funding from DG HOME and non-EU funded budget, data which was retrieved from the Commission's legal data per project. By comparing the total costs per project to the effectiveness scoring based on the scorecard assessment, it does not transpire that projects with higher costs were more effective in relation to the GAMMMA+ model scoring.

Table 3 - List of CSEP projects and their allocated budget

Project name	Call	Duration	Max. grant amount	Total costs	Scorecard
RAGE	2017	01/03/2019-31/05/2021	€ 997,679.30	€ 1,108,532.56	42.99
GAMER	2018	1.11.2019-31.01.2022	€ 989,777.18	€ 1,099,752.42	39.5

Project name	Call	Duration	Max. grant amount	Total costs	Scorecard
Oltre l'orizzonte	2017	15/11/2018-14/11/2020	€ 961,209.87	€ 1,068,011.94	51.75
CICERO	2017	01/02/2019-31/07/2021	€ 952,297.00	€ 1,058,765.00	40
EU (RVIEU)	2017	01/11/2018 - 30/11/2020	€ 926,990.00	€ 1,030,007.68	42.5
(Re)think	2017	01/11/2018 - 31/10/2020	€ 893,218.14	€ 992,464.59	37.25
ONarVla	2018	01/01/2020 - 31/12/2021	€ 892,123.20	€ 991,248.00	42
Extremely Eunited	2017	01/01/2020 - 28/02/2022	€ 891,961.37	€ 991,068.24	39
CONCORD	2018	01/11/2019 - 31/10/2021	€ 890,301.20	€ 989,223.56	34
Project Grey	2017	01/11/2018 - 31/01/2021	€ 771,999.54	€ 857,777.27	45.25
DECOUNT	2017	01/11/2018 - 31/12/2020	€ 712,518.89	€ 791,687.65	42.75
D.O.B.T.	2017	15/01/2018-14/05/2021	€ 651,517.65	€ 736,138.60	47.25
COMMIT	2018	01/01/2020 - 30/06/2022	€ 602,997.63	€ 669,975.15	26.5
PRECOBIAS	2018	01/12/2019-28/02/2022	€ 580,593.67	€ 645,104.07	46.5
OPEN	2018	01/11/2019 - 30/04/2022	€ 508,936.00	€ 565,485.00	30.25
Action plan for Portugal	2017	07/12/2018-31/12/2020	€ 377,693.00	€ 419,660.42	43.25
EUROTOPIA	2017	1/11/2018-30/11/2020	€ 355,972.00	€ 395,525.50	27.75
Counteract	2017	01/01/2019-30/04/2021	€ 250,674.77	€ 358,863.02	39.5
Breaking the ISIS Brand Narrative	2018	01/01/2020 - 31/12/2021	€ 320,967.90	€ 356,631.00	44.5
YouthRightOn	2017	01/01/2019 to 30/06/2021	€ 309,309.82	€ 343,677.58	51.75

Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

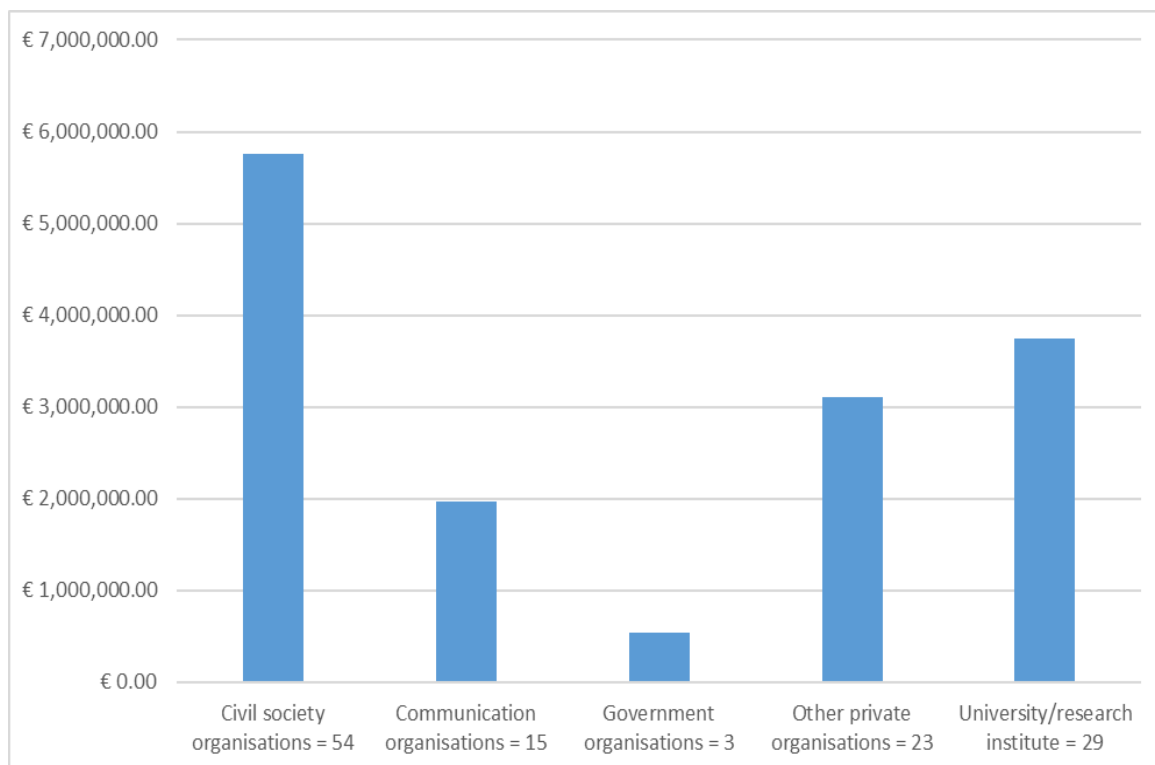
In fact, two projects with the highest budget (RAGE and GAMER) involved different types of activities, both combining activities of engagement with creating gaming tools. The last two projects in terms of total costs YouthRightOn and Breaking the ISIS Brand Narrative (see Table 3 above) had relatively high scores based on the scorecard assessment, with lower costs involved in contrast to all the other CSEP projects. Both projects funded activities and campaign content for social media platforms and carried out activities online, in addition to involving a small number of partners in their consortia.

In short, projects with a smaller number of consortium partners and with more traditional approaches to communication incurred lesser costs. Due to the different approaches employed to carry out communication campaigns and differences in the number of partners involved in the consortia, it is difficult to compare the budget used to the benefits generated across projects.

Civil society organisations had the highest total costs when compared to all the other types of organisations involved in CSEP-funded projects. Figure 20 below sets out the total costs per type of organisation involved in all 20 projects. The information on the budget is based on the total costs per partner, information which was retrieved from each project's

Grant Agreement. These costs may differ in the case of many projects because of changes in the consortium partnership (e.g. partners who left) or changes in the budget used. A more accurate description based on the actual costs can be made by using the final evaluations of the Commission, when these are available for all projects.

Figure 20 - Total costs per type of organisation



Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

The pandemic was identified as the main factor that influenced the relationship between the initially set budget and objectives. In relation to the factors that influenced the efficiency of the observed results (Appendix 2 EQ 30), the pandemic brought a shift in how activities were carried out for most projects. Frequently, the mode of delivery for activities changed and it entailed less costs than its face-to-face counterpart (e.g. trainings that were planned to be offline had to be adjusted to online platforms, therefore the costs changed). In the case of project YouthRightOn, the costs of travel and accommodation for the workshops with teachers that was originally an offline activity were moved to printing more guides for one of their target groups (teachers).

Another factor that was identified to be a challenge in terms of efficiency at project-level was related to partners. In some projects, the large number of partners was in some cases identified as a bottleneck due to the difficulty it posed in coordination and in the distribution of resources. Moreover, although not widespread across projects, the turnover in human resources was also identified as a challenge to efficiency because of the time spent on the familiarisation with the project for the new personnel.

Analysis of the evidence on the efficiency of the communication activities (EQ 31) showed that, although offline activities were preferred, activities involving social media platforms were more cost-effective due to their lower costs combined with the benefits of reaching a wider target audience. Before the switch to online activities due to the pandemic, many projects settled on having at least one communication activity of online social media campaigns because of their wide reach and the low costs attached to them. Face-to-face communication activities bring a more direct sense of engaging the audience but often with more costs attached.

Another finding based on EU-level and project-level interviews points to some differences in opportunities in terms of co-funding for CSOs. In the case of some projects, the co-funding rules (20% co-funding) were more difficult to meet because of the lack of funding from other sources, something that CSOs often experience in regions or countries that do not support such activities.

3.3.2. Efficiency in the management of the programme and projects (EQ 28, 32)

The direct management approach of the Commission was generally found to be an efficient way of funding CSEP for the projects that participated. The direct approach to funding consortia provided freedom and flexibility for organisations to pursue relevant topics in the field of P/CVE at national or cross-national level. Many organisations found it easier to collaborate directly with the Commission than through national authorities, especially for CSOs in Member States where the environment is not conducive to the non-governmental sector or even to certain issues being promoted among youth or in schools. In addition, the application process and requirements left more flexibility to create partnerships with different actors (e.g. communications companies, CSOs, universities etc.), which is less common at the level of national funding.

That being said, some contrasting views were uncovered with regard to the administrative level of cooperation with the Commission. Most respondents qualified the working relationship with the Commission as flexible during the design stage, and in relation to project deliverables, partners or other adjustments that projects needed to make. However, several project level interviews pointed to certain bottlenecks relating to the degree of timeliness of responses from the Commission. In relation to the financing rules, smaller CSOs or organisations with less experience in how EU projects are funded had more difficulties in terms of managing the funds and bureaucratic aspects of the funding.

In relation to the efficiency of communication channels, offline communication channels were preferred even if sometimes at a higher cost than online communication channels. Findings about the efficiency of communication channels (EQ 32) show that participants in CSEP projects consortia rather preferred using offline channels to engage with the audience in their projects, although some mentioned that many online channels have the benefits of having a wider reach at a smaller cost.

3.4. Coherence

This section presents an assessment relating to the criterion of coherence for the evaluation questions EQ 33, EQ 34 (Appendix 2). It looks at the coherence between the various communication activities chosen in individual projects, as well as between projects funded by CSEP and other similar projects in the same target region/country. The subsections below present these findings.

Box 7 - Key findings relating to the criterion of coherence

Coherence was analysed from the perspective of internal communication activities within CSEP funded projects and externally between projects in the same region or country. In terms of internal coherence, the communication activities undertaken within CSEP projects were found to be coherent between each other, with activities being chosen on the basis of complementarity in reaching the project objectives and the target audiences. External coherence between projects in different regions/countries was rather limited. With limited knowledge about other initiatives in the field of P/CVE from outside of CSEP-funded activities and with little interaction and exchanges between project consortia, synergies were hardly established. Findings pointed out that RAN meetings with all participating consortia leading projects funded by CSEP were the main connection points to have exchanges between participants from different CSEP-funded projects.

3.4.1. Internal coherence of communication activities within projects (EQ 33)

Analysis shows that communication activities used in CSEP-funded projects were complementary and interconnected. The choice of particular communication activities and the connection between these depended primarily on several considerations: the target audience and what resonated better with their interests and media consumption, the topic or issue addressed by the project, the experience of the partners with the audience and issue, as well as other factors.

An important consideration for all projects was to choose communication activities that best fit their target audience, through activities that can best reach them. In some projects, communication activities were identified and chosen by conducting preliminary research/co-creation with the target audience in the inception phase of the project (i.e. to see what activities better resonate with the target audience). Posts and other activities (e.g. influencers campaigns, videos) on social media platforms were generally found to be good at reaching many people in the audience and, especially in the case of young people, a good way to reach them in an environment these are exposed to daily and that they enjoy.

A combination of offline and online activities was identified as the best way to both engage face-to-face with the audience and reach a large number of people. Project level interviews uncovered that a combination of online and offline activities provided a more coherent package of engagement and reach towards their target audience. Face-to-face activities were generally preferred by many organisations because these were seen by respondents as a way to have a deeper engagement with the target audience. Although offline activities were planned by many projects, due to the pandemic these had to switch to an online format and were consequently adapted. Many projects combined trainings (offline or online, with the audience/stakeholders) together with online activities (e.g. using social media platforms, websites etc.).

3.4.2. External coherence between projects in different regions/countries (EQ 34)

The analysis shows that there were limited synergies developed between CSEP-funded projects and other similar activities in their target regions or countries. This finding refers to both synergies between CSEP-funded projects and other CSEP-funded projects, but also between CSEP-funded projects and other projects in P/CVE outside CSEP funding.

A main finding derived from the analysis relates to the limited knowledge among organisations participating to CSEP about similar initiatives (non-EU/EU-funded) in the region or country where their activities took place. In fact, in many countries it was reported that there are no comparable nationally funded projects addressing P/CVE, leaving very

few examples of initiatives conducted at national level. Moreover, where programmes or projects existed at national level, there was limited interaction and familiarisation with these.

Analysis of project level interviews found that the main point of connection between project consortia was through RAN-organised meetings and peer sessions. The main communication with fellow recipients of CSEP funding occurred at RAN meetings. Although the benefits derived from potential collaborations between projects in the same region or country were identified by some respondents (i.e. using tools that may be applicable in more contexts), in very few cases such synergies were established. Several organisations participated in more than one CSEP-funded project which may have facilitated exchanges of experiences between projects in different regions or addressing different topics. The Commission facilitated venues to explore joint working, but with no further collaborations establishing synergies outside these meetings.

As such, projects were not found to actively pursue synergies with other projects outside of the RAN event space. This was confirmed by EU level interviewees who mentioned a partial lack of willingness of projects to engage with other CSEP projects. This was in turn confirmed by project level interviewees, of which many noted that they were partially aware of other CSEP funded projects but did not know of the specific knowledge that could be learnt from them. Considering the opportunities presented through the RAN events, the evidence suggests that there is a lack of take-up of knowledge from and/or a lack of willingness for active synergies to be developed across CSEP-funded projects.

There are several initiatives from the European Commission that address topics that have been tackled by CSEP-funded projects. Many projects from the two calls of the CSEP decided to focus their communication activities on tackling online extremism by addressing hate speech or online disinformation. At the level of other Directorates-Generals, there are on-going initiatives in the area of fighting hate speech and hate crimes (DG JUST), in combatting online disinformation (DG CONNECT), and in tools for evidence-based evaluations of P/CVE campaigns (DG RTD), some examples which could potentially be considered for the future of CSEP.

3.5. EU Added Value

This section provides an assessment of the CSEP's EU added value for individuals and organisations in the EU. It assesses whether the Programme added value as anticipated by looking at how the intervention made a difference for stakeholders, compared to a situation in which there had not been such an intervention by the EU.

Box 8 - Key findings relating to the criterion of EU added value

The CSEP funded projects, and the CSEP as a whole, was found to have clear EU added value. This was primarily due to the varying degree to which Member States across the EU place a priority on the prevention of radicalisation. Indeed, Member States with more polarised political contexts were more likely to not provide funding to PCV/CVE campaigns, due to the sensitivity of the field. Thus, CSOs supported by the CSEP operating in these contexts would likely not have received funding at the national level. EU added value was also perceived to be brought about through the building of international networks, contacts and the sharing of knowledge. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic having limited the opportunities to meet in-person, the CSEP funded RAN events were seen to be a key facilitator of this, with several of the project level interviews highlighting their importance to their continued work in the field of PCV/CVE. Despite this, there is less evidence to suggest that the material and knowledge gathered in the RAN trainings were actually used as part of the CSEP funded projects.

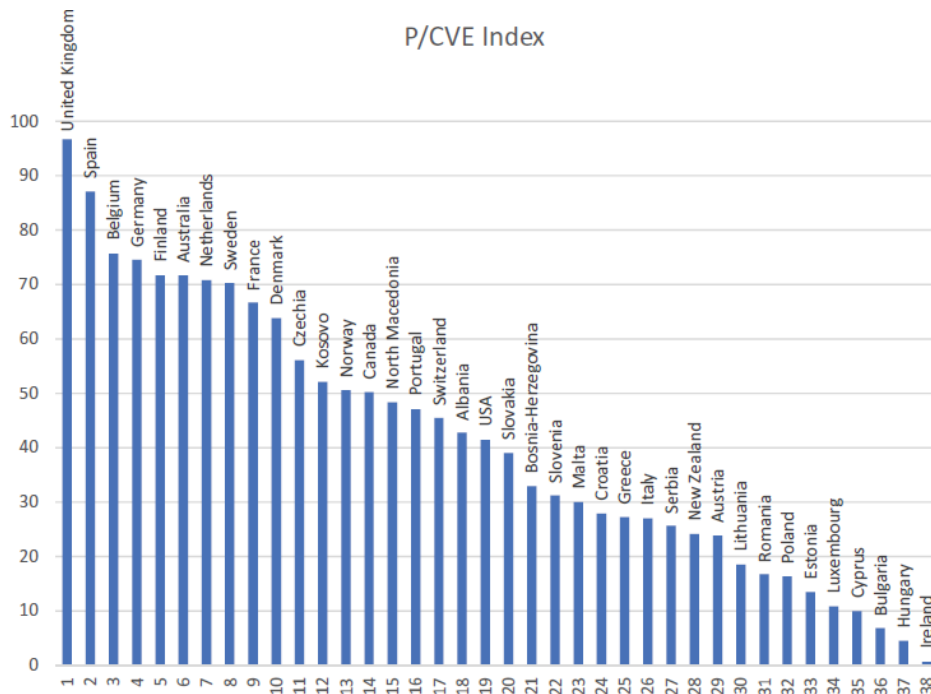
3.5.1. The added value resulting from individual projects' communication approaches (EQ 35-36)

Analysis of EU and project level interviews indicates clear added value of CSEP in supporting CSOs where limited funding opportunities were available⁶⁷. One of the main areas of EU added value that was identified was the role of CSEP in providing targeted support to projects in the development of P/CVE campaigns. While existing support at the EU level could have encouraged CSOs in their work against radicalising content online through knowledge sharing, evidence suggests that CSOs (that were funded by CSEP) would not have been able to create similar campaigns without the targeted support from the CSEP.

Several reasons were uncovered in relation to this. For example, available funding for P/CVE campaigns at the national/ regional levels was noted to be lacking across different countries and contexts in the EU. This lack of funding was seen to correlate with the level of political will and priorities within different Member States, with varying levels of funding being available at the national level for CSOs.

To illustrate the differences between Member States, research carried out by Shanaah and Heath-Kelly (2022) developed an index related to the levels of action by national governments in the area of P/CVE. The index used a scoring based on the extent to which a country had strategy and/or institution dedicated to P/CVE in place as well as prevention, intervention and rehabilitation policies in place. The results outlined that there are substantial variations in the proliferation of P/CVE deployment among and inside western countries.

Figure 21. P/CVE index based on the degree to which a country has a strategy and institutions dedicated to P/CVE as well as prevention, intervention and rehabilitation policies in place.



Source: (Shanaah and Heath-Kelly, 2022)⁶⁸

⁶⁷ For example, in Hungary, Romania, Poland, Italy and Portugal.

⁶⁸ Sadi Shanaah & Charlotte Heath-Kelly (2022): What Drives Counter- Extremism? The Extent of P/CVE Policies in the West and Their Structural Correlates, Terrorism and Political Violence, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2022.2080063. p.g.12

It should also be noted that the differences between countries also revealed that there are also stark differences in terms of ambition, with some countries having strategies and institutions in place for countering extremism but do very little in terms of concrete actions. Thus, this research further evidences the challenges the CSEP faced in supporting P/CVE actions across Europe and alludes to a greater degree of EU added value being achieved by the programme through funding projects in countries with lower levels of action or ambition in the field of P/CVE.

Political contexts were also found to hamper the support available for CSOs in the field of P/CVE campaigning, with Member States which have stronger far-right/far-left movements being more cautious to fund work in the field of radicalisation. Thus, considering these factors, the CSEP was able to provide support to CSOs in varying political contexts. The results of this support were found to increase the opportunities for the sharing of knowledge and capacity building within different project consortia, as well as more broadly, primarily through events organised by RAN.

In a separate vein, it should also be noted that there are many other CSOs working in the P/CVE field in the EU which were not covered as part of the CSEP, thus the findings can only present the views of the CSOs involved in the 20 funded CSEP projects. Thus from the perspective of the EU added value of the CSEP, it could be posited that the added value of the programme was limited by its scope in terms of the number of CSOs it could support through direct funding. That being said, findings under the criterion of relevance and effectiveness point to greater achievements and relevance being derived from a narrowing of the scope of both the CSEP and the projects it supports.

CSEP was also found to add value through supporting CSOs in the building of international contacts and interacting with experts in different EU Member States.

This aspect was perceived by EU and project level interviews to add value, both as a result of capacity building training events implemented through RAN and of the CSEP-funded projects themselves. In particular, several of the project level interviewees noted the positive benefits of cross-border consortia in enabling the exchange of knowledge, experience and practices across different contexts in the EU, as well as the creation of a wider network of experts working in the field of P/CVE.

In practice, however, project level interviewees also noted the challenges in conducting P/CVE activities across borders.

Operating cross-border can present challenges in how the campaign messages can be applied between two or more national contexts, which can vary largely in terms of the target audience and the way in which they engage with campaign material. Indeed, the element of cross-border cooperation within projects raises a paradox of the CSEP. Evidence suggests that campaign success is more often brought about at the hyper-local level. However, the vision of the CSEP was to be EU wide through the promotion of cross-border partnerships. This vision has the potential to hinder the ability of campaigns to operate at the hyper local level successfully.

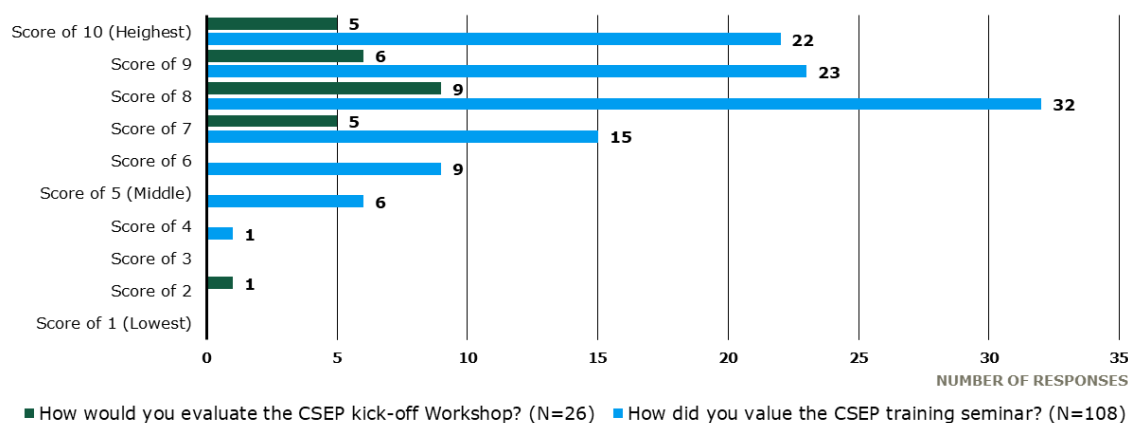
There is a concession, however, that while cross-border partnerships have been found to generate some successes within several of the CSEP projects, it should be acknowledged that these partnerships often need to be paired with different campaign approaches that are broader and have less specific target groups. As such, if cross-border elements were to be incorporated more widely within future CSEP projects, the evidence suggests that they would have a greater potential to tackle primary prevention compared to secondary prevention (see Table 1 for definitions of both forms of prevention).

3.5.2. Attendance and views on CSEP training workshops organised within the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (funded by the EC)? (EQ 37)

Considering the views of CSEP beneficiaries which took part in CSEP training workshops organised by RAN is another way to assess the programme EU added value. In order to put the findings into context, the following figure presents the participant evaluations of two

key events that were funded by CSEP and carried out by RAN: the CSEP kick off workshop (held in March 2017) and the CSEP training seminar (held in November 2017).

Figure 22 - RAN event participants evaluation of two key events: CSEP kick off workshop and the CSEP training seminar



Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

The figure above outlines that the participants who completed the post-event surveys, perceived the events positively, with the majority scoring the events above eight out of 10. Notably, 53 out of the 108 survey participants that took part in the CSEP training seminar answered that they planned (at the time) to apply for CSEP funding to deliver online campaigns against violent extremism, applying the knowledge and tools that were provided by the training seminar. Furthermore, only seven out of 108 survey responses noted that they did not acquire any new insights following the training. Thus overall, from the inception of the CSEP, the training and kick-off workshop were perceived to be of value by those that attended.

Analysis of project level interviews found that almost all of the members of the funded projects had attended one or more events organised by the RAN network, and that these were judged useful overall. Indeed, a large majority of interviewees found the RAN events to be very useful, particularly through the networking and sharing of knowledge that they facilitated.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic should also be taken into account due to RAN activities being forced to be provided virtually. This was noted to have had an impact on the usefulness and attractiveness of the RAN events, with offline events being preferred due to the greater opportunities they provide for networking.

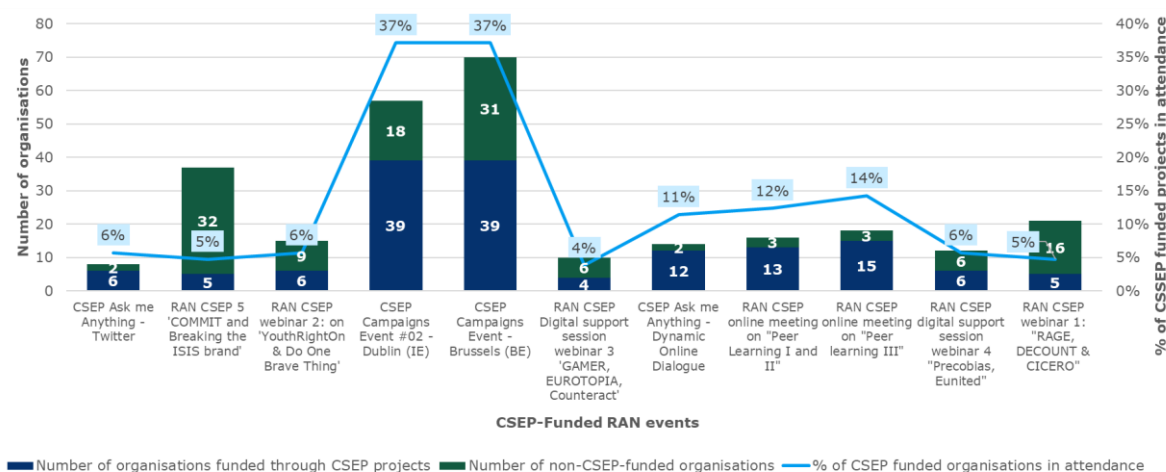
Despite this, there is less evidence to suggest that the material and knowledge gathered in the RAN trainings were actually used as part of the CSEP funded projects. The scorecard assessment (see Appendix 4) found that only a small number of projects (two to three) have strong scores across each element of the GAMMMA+ model. This thus suggests two possible scenarios, [1] that project participants were not fully aware of the GAMMMA+ model (e.g. the knowledge gained by given members of the consortium who participated in RAN events may not have been passed on to other consortium members) or [2] that project participants were aware but did not know how to successfully implement and follow the model successfully. In both scenarios, it outlines that the knowledge shared during the CSEP funded RAN events may not have been fully taken up by CSEP funded projects. In addition, EU level interviewees also noted that many of the RAN events were not attended by participants from all Member States across the EU.

Notably, Member States which are traditionally strong in the field of radicalisation and prevention work (i.e. France, Germany and – at the time- the UK) did not attend the events. It was noted by interviewees that this lack of attendance could have had an impact on the

degree to which such countries' knowledge and best practices were shared with other countries that may not be as strong in the field of P/CVE. In this respect, the EU added value of the RAN events was somewhat reduced. That being said, EU level interviews presented somewhat contrary evidence, suggesting that the main aim of the RAN events was to teach organisations that had little experience in conducting campaigns. Thus, the inclusion of organisations that were experienced from Member States and had a stronger background in P/CVE work may not have added any additional value compared to the content which was delivered in the training events.

Part of the reason that material and knowledge shared in the RAN events may not have been actually used as part of the CSEP funded projects was due to only 13% of CSEP funded organisations (on average) being attending the 11 RAN events. As shown in the figure below, the number of participants within the CSEP funded RAN events was found to be low, particularly amount organisations that were part of CSEP funded projects. While it can be caveated that in some cases projects would agree to only the project coordinator attending the events, in most of the events the number of projects represented was low.

Figure 23. CSEP funded projects participation in RAN funded events



Source: RAN participants lists

In considering the EU added value of the RAN activities, it should be noted that it is not possible to estimate the volume or scope effects, given that the total number of CSOs working in the field of P/CVE is unclear. Despite this, given that the RAN events operate at an EU level and provide a space for CSOs to interact, network and gain new skills, implies a clear added value, considering that it is unlikely that such platforms exist at the national level. That being said, the EU added value of the RAN events could be enhanced through more thematically specific events (such as on the GAMMMA+ model), which include best practices and examples of how future campaigns could be designed and implemented successfully. Increasing the attendance of events would also be an important aspect for a future EU initiative to ensure that information and knowledge can be more widely shared.

3.6. Sustainability

The criterion of sustainability examines how likely the effects of the CSEP were to last after the funded projects had been completed. In this criterion, four main questions are assessed including the [1] effects of the CSEP projects after their completing, [2] areas that could be improved to ensure sustainability of results, [3] the degree to which projects ensured sustainability and [4] successful approaches to sustainability by CSEP funded projects.

Box 9 - Key findings relating to the criterion of Sustainability

The evaluation found some evidence of where impacts from CSEP projects were able to be continued after the projects had been completed. Despite this, the degree to which these impacts were long lasting was found to be mixed. Interviews with project staff raised the available time and resource allocation as a limitation to their ability to both ensure and also measure long-term impacts. Furthermore, stakeholders noted a lack of awareness regarding the original intention for the CSEP to fund projects that would then be taken up by national level stakeholders. Where projects did include some examples of sustainability of impacts, the main reasons for this were them considering this in the design of campaigns, and keeping in mind at the start of the project how the effects of the campaigns could be ensured. A diverse and knowledgeable consortium, specifically in P/CVE work and communication campaigns was also noted to be a key element for sustainability.

3.6.1. The degree to which CSEP projects produced effects which lasted after the communication actions had ended (EQ 38, 40)

It should be noted that sustainability within communication campaigns of the CSEP can be understood as projects which enabled the campaigns and campaign materials to be continually used and absorbed by the target audience after the project had finished.

Analysis of the evidence points to mixed results in terms of the sustainability of the impacts of CSEP funded projects. It is first of all useful to note that sustainability was one of the elements listed under the award criteria in the CSEP call for proposals:

“Expected results, dissemination, sustainability and long-term impact : the expected results are appropriate for the achievement of the objectives in the action; the dissemination strategy is clear, targeted and appropriate; the stream of benefits is likely to continue after the period of external support has ended; the project’s results ensure a long-term impact on the target groups and/or general public”

(European Commission, CSEP 2018 Call for proposals)

However, evidence from the contextual analysis (Appendix 3) outlined the challenges for P/CVE campaigns to ensure long lasting impacts. In particular, the contextual analysis found that many projects in this area can be characterised as one-off initiatives with a limited reach, scale, and duration, which reduces the potential long-term impact of the interventions. Instead, there is a need for P/CVE campaigns to communicate the message continuously and in multiple formats. The analysis of CSEP projects suggests that they generally conform to the description above in terms of their reach, scale, and duration, pointing to the likelihood of them struggling to ensure sustainable impacts, as is further detailed below.

Despite projects being awarded on the assumption that they would deliver “long-term impact”, evidence from project level interviews pointed to two main reasons why long-term impacts could not be ensured. Firstly, the resources and time restraints of the projects (CSEP projects ran on average for 26 months, and with an average budget of EUR 788,650) hindered the ability to adequately implement activities which could bring about long-term impacts. Secondly, more time was needed to evaluate the long-term impacts of campaigns, particularly for behavioural change assessments.

From a practical point of view, interviews primarily at the EU-level emphasised how short-term interventions do not necessarily have a large bearing in terms of wider P/CVE activities, specifically in working towards reducing the spread of radicalising content/recruitment processes online. Indeed, this view was partially supported by the scorecard

analysis which identified several projects which had not put in place sufficient processes to ensure the sustainability of outputs and results. Thus, from this perspective, evidence suggests that the sustainability of the individual projects' communication approaches was only partially ensured.

The CSEP was originally created with the intention that it would fund projects which would then be taken up by Member States or national level stakeholders, but there was a lack of awareness of this among stakeholders. EU and project level interviews pointed to a lack of awareness of CSEP's vision for how long-term impacts could be ensured. Indeed, the calls for proposals did not include this aspect for potential beneficiaries to be aware of. This lack of awareness undoubtedly has an impact on the degree to which projects were able to design campaign approaches which could foresee, or plan for, campaign activities to be taken up at the national level, following the end of CSEP funding. Indeed it could be further posited that if projects had been aware of this intention, then it could have led to disparities in the degree to which the impacts of campaigns could be continued. For example, as noted in section 3.5.1, the degree to which campaigns could continue funding at the national level is greatly dependant on the level of political will and prioritisation for the prevention of radicalisation. Thus, it is unlikely that had CSEP projects been aware of the original intention for national level up take, that all projects would have been able to continue, or ensure long lasting impacts equally across all Member States.

Evidence was also uncovered regarding the need for a more holistic view in terms of the role of CSEP in supporting the ongoing work in the field of P/CVE at the EU and national levels. While CSEP provides targeted support to funded projects and training activities through the RAN, several EU level and project level interviews highlighted that the sustainability of CSEP activities could be increased if they were to work towards wider objectives, beyond that of the CSEP. Indeed, as discussed in the relevance section (see Section 3.1), within the Commission, greater synergies could be made between similar funding programmes, for example between the CSEP and other EU initiatives tackling hate speech and extremism.

With regards to the connection between projects and the Member States they are implemented in, it was suggested that funded projects could work towards both EU level and Member State specific targets in relation to P/CVE activities. Through this approach, projects could work within local contexts, support ongoing national efforts, and provide the opportunity for Member States to continue the efforts of the funded project within their wider activities in the future. This approach was perceived to be a method that could ensure the sustainability of the CSEP funded projects, avoiding project material not being utilised after project funding had ended.

With regards to external effects, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was raised predominantly by project level interviews under projects in the 2018 calls for proposals. While the transition from offline activities to online was noted to have created additional work, the impacts on the sustainability of outputs was not found to be pronounced. Although some interviewees cited the lack of in-person networking and the benefits that it provides for knowledge sharing as a negative impact of the pandemic, there was a general consensus that the activities were still able to take place, having a small impact on the sustainability of the project outcomes.

3.6.2. Considerations for how the sustainability of effects can be ensured in future campaigns (EQ 39, 40, 41)

Despite mixed perceptions of the sustainability of the CSEP funded projects, examples were uncovered projects that were able to encourage the sustainability of activities. It should be noted that one of the main examples of the sustainability which was provided by project level interviewees and project documentation was the material from the campaigns being available online after the project had been completed. While material online can have long-lasting impacts, these are only long-lasting if there is a continued

awareness and sign posting of the material to relevant audiences. Indeed, the very essence of a successful communications campaign is that the communication activities and material are repeatedly exposed and renewed to the target audience, as mentioned above.

An important bearing on the sustainability of a project was found to originate from the project design and methodology. Evidence from the scorecard analysis (Appendix 4) and project level interviews found that projects which anticipated how the results of their activities could be taken-up and used after the project was completed was a crucial element in ensuring the sustainability of outcomes. In addition, analysis of project level interviews found that consortia which included members/ organisations with previous expertise in P/CVE, mixed with other organisations with experience in campaign methodologies and implementation, enhanced the likelihood of sustainability. This was found to be the case due to the exchange of knowledge and trainings that occurred in offline activities which, in several cases, were able to empower practitioners to counter and deter radicalising content/ recruitment processes both on and offline.

Moreover, campaigns which incorporated offline elements were generally able to ensure greater sustainability. This is supported by evidence uncovered in the contextual analysis (Appendix 3Appendix 3), where research indicated that capacity building focusing on prevention, identification and handling of radicalisation among front-line personnel such as teachers and social workers can be a driver for preventive strategies. This was found to be the case in several CSEP project due to the exchange of knowledge and trainings that occurred in offline activities which, in several cases, were able to empower practitioners to counter and deter radicalising content/ recruitment processes both on and offline.

4. Conclusions, benchmarking and reflections

The following chapter presents the conclusions and lessons learnt across each of the evaluation criteria, including relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, EU added value and sustainability. This section is followed by the results from the benchmarking exercise of CSEP projects.

4.1. Conclusions and lessons learnt

4.1.1. Overarching conclusions on the CSEP



Conclusion 1: As a pilot programme, the CSEP was an important first step in testing the types of support that the Commission could provide to empower CSOs and address target audiences in the EU susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online.

The launch of the CSEP in June 2016 represented an important first step in the support of CSOs in providing effective alternative and counter narratives to terrorist and extremist content online. While support from the Commission to CSOs is not a new phenomenon, the CSEP was unique in that it was directly targeted to CSOs and organisations in the development of P/CVE campaigns – something that was historically supported at the national, regional and local levels.

It is also important to recognise the significance of the programme in the evolution of the online sphere. In the inception of the CSEP in 2016, legislation and policy making at the EU level on tackling terrorism, violent extremism and the prevention of radicalisation online was only starting to emerge. This was seen through the launch of the EU Internet forum in 2015, the establishment of the Internet Referral Unit (IRU) by Europol in 2015, and the launch of an impact assessment in 2015 aimed at updating the Framework Decision on Terrorism. Similarly, EU policymakers were becoming more aware of the role that social media and tech companies could play in relation to policies tackling online radicalisation.

Indeed, the fast-paced evolution of the internet is particularly striking. Just over the course of the duration of the CSEP, there was a cultural shift in the active role of social media organisations, moving from being mere providers of an online space, to acting as regulators and sensors of content. Similarly, there was an evolution in the types of content delivered in online spaces, with a shift away from purely textual correspondence to photos, to videos and then to short-high engagement-videos through platforms such as TikTok and Instagram.

Thus, in considering the context in which the CSEP was introduced, in retrospect, it was launched at an important and pivotal moment in the fight against online terrorist, extremism and radicalisation.



Conclusion 2: The design and vision of the CSEP changed after its inception in 2017, with an evolution in how CSOs were used within and alongside funded projects.

Comparison between the initial documentation and concepts of the CSEP, and the CSEP that is under evaluation in this study uncovered notable changes and an evolved understanding of the role of CSOs. The CSEP was conceived as an initiative to support CSOs in providing effective alternative and counter narratives to terrorist and

extremist content online⁶⁹. The 2017/18 calls for proposals stated that the goal of the call for proposals were “to support projects of CSOs that pursue all of the objectives of the CSEP”. Thus, from the inception of the CSEP, CSOs were foreseen to be the direct “beneficiaries” of the programme and the entities that would design and implement P/CVE campaigns.

Evidence from the project level analysis confirmed that the role of CSOs, as it was intended under the CSEP, was different to their actual role within projects. Projects were primarily found to be led by a variety of organisations (e.g. NGOs, Communication organisations and peace-making organisations), while the role of CSOs was seen in two different ways. The first way in which CSOs were integrated in projects was their involvement as important bridges between the campaigns and the target audiences. Indeed the “grass-roots” knowledge from CSOs proved to be an important factor in the success of many of the projects. By so doing, the CSEP was able to empower CSOs to a certain extent, by providing them with increased capacity and knowledge with respect to the prevention of radicalisation within vulnerable groups. The second type of involvement of CSOs in several of the projects was also through training activities. Thus, in this second type of involvement, the CSEP did not directly empower CSOs, but rather CSEP projects would carry out offline activities which would then enable CSOs to be trained so that they can use the gained expertise in their own contexts (further reflections on the future role of CSOs are presented in Section 4.3.2).

Evidence also showed that the CSEP mandate was shaped by projects, with a refocus on supporting the development of on- and offline campaign activities, with the empowerment of CSOs, not as the implementors (who were primarily organisations with experience in implementing EU wide projects), but more as the knowledge and context brokers within P/CVE campaigns and activities.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 2

- **LL 2.1:** Evidence outlined the important role of CSOs as knowledge brokers and practitioners between projects and local contexts. The development of a future CSEP should re-align the intended vision of the use of CSOs to being actively involved in project consortia, but not as being directly responsible for the design and implementation of the projects. This is due to CSOs being more prominent and influential as knowledge brokers than campaign coordinators. Indeed, their role as key messengers and acting as bridges within target communities should be emphasised and encouraged (further reflections on the future role of CSOs are presented in Section 4.3.2).



Conclusion 3: The field of P/CVE is a multifaceted and complex area which relies upon the interconnections between different levers of action, be it through communication campaigns, capacity building activities or targeted intervention through social services.

Evidence from the concept note (see Appendix 3), RAN documentation and wider literature clearly outlines that to enable the provision of support and guidance at vulnerable stages of life, there is a strong need for **integrated interventions which leverage a holistic approach for strategic communications as a driver for impact**. It is well documented that online communication campaigns alone do not have significant impacts on the prevention of radicalisation, but rather there is also a need for a wider set of activities offline

⁶⁹ The Commission adopted the Communication supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism (COM(2016)379) which set up the Civil Society Empowerment Programme (CSEP).

to strengthen trust and the tangibility of intervention within target groups⁷⁰. In addition, research points to capacity building focusing on prevention, identification and handling of radicalisation among front-line personnel such as teachers and social workers to be a strong driver for preventive strategies.

The CSEP first and foremost aimed to strengthen multi-stakeholder cooperation between civil society organisations⁷¹ in the area of alternative and counter narratives preventing radicalisation and violent extremism online, as well as encouraging the use of online reporting channels and tools⁷². Despite its intentions, the CSEP placed a strong focus on the development of counter and alternative campaigns online, with offline activities being seen as a smaller and complementary part of projects. This focus on online communication campaigns over taking a more balanced, holistic approach, as the research alludes to, suggests that the programme could have achieved greater impact had it taken a more holistic approach from its inception.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 3

- **LL 3.1:** The focus of the CSEP on funding communication campaigns created an imbalance in terms of the support that is evidenced to work most effectively. There is a consensus within the literature that actions within the P/CVE area require a holistic approach, with activities such as communication campaigns being one of several different measures that can help to prevent radicalisation within vulnerable groups. Thus, future EU intervention through programmes such as the CSEP would benefit from re-considering the types of support that can be funded at an EU level, and the potential impacts it may bring about (further reflections on future approaches are presented in Section 4.3.2).



Conclusion 4: Evidence suggests that there is knowledge and research on how P/CVE campaigns can be conducted, however its translation into practice is lacking.

One of the main overarching findings of the study was the disconnect between available and known information on how campaigns should best be developed, compared with what was actually done and the results achieved through CSEP funded projects. Overall, the majority of CSEP funded projects were found to have developed successful projects, with varying levels of results with regards to the impacts and outputs. Despite this, evidence from the scorecard and project level assessments indicate that there is still an overall gap between theory and practice.

In the scorecard assessment, for example, evidence found that while the majority of the projects were successful in designing and implementing campaigns according to the GAMMMA+ model, only two or three projects scored highly in each element of the model. This suggests two possible scenarios: [1] projects are not fully aware of the GAMMMA+ principles in general or that [2] projects are aware of the GAMMMA+ principles but are not fully aware of how to implement them.

⁷⁰ Jones, M. & Freear, M. (2021): Consolidated Overview Paper: Lessons Learned From Strategic Communication and Alternative and Counter Narrative Campaigns; RAN (2022): Event Conclusion Paper: Member states workshop; Jones, M. (2020): Through the Looking Glass – Assessing the Evidence Base for P/CVE Communications

⁷¹ Particularly local/grass-root ones, researchers, Internet companies, creative and communication companies and where relevant other stakeholders, such as public authorities

⁷² European Commission (2018). Call for proposals on the Civil Society Empowerment Programme (CSEP) – campaigns with counter and alternative narrative to radicalisation implemented by Civil society organisations. ISFP-2018-AG-CT-CSEP. P.5

Over the course of the CSEP, the RAN conducted several events to present the GAMMMA+ model and produced several in-depth and practical documents⁷³ that projects could use in the development of their campaign. Thus, it is less likely that projects were not aware of the model and best practice in the area given the available resources and support that was provided, as well as the degree of participation in these events. Instead, it is more likely that there may be gap in the knowledge as to how the GAMMMA+ principals can be implemented in practice.

More generally, the development of the campaign level benchmarks in this evaluation found similar, if not identical, best practices to what the RAN documentation had already set out in detail prior to/during the programme⁷⁴. Thus, the evidence points to the issue not being the need for more research into campaign methodologies and approaches, but rather the need for practical support and guidance on how these best practices can be used in practice in the design, implementation and evaluation of future campaigns.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 4

- **LL 4.1:** Available research and best practices should continue to be promoted and widely sign-posted to future CSEP-funded campaigns. In particular, the use of the guidance and tools generated by RAN should be encouraged, primarily in the design stage of projects, to ensure that campaigns are developed with a solid methodological framework.
- **LL 4.2:** Evidence suggests that greater support is needed in the practical implementation of the campaign approaches. Therefore, a greater emphasis should be placed on training events and available documentation on the practical implementation of theory, paired with real-world examples. While efforts were made to provide practical, bilateral support (e.g. in relation to the GAMMMA+ model), only limited use was made of this support by the projects. Projects would benefit from being more consistently paired with RAN or Commission experts who could act as a point of knowledge and support for projects. This would be particularly useful in ensuring that best practices are translated into projects as they are being designed.

4.1.2. Relevance of the CSEP and projects



Conclusion 5: The objectives of CSEP funded projects were aligned with the general objectives of the programme due to their broad nature, however there is a need to ensure that programme and project objectives are more targeted and achievable in the future.

Evidence from project documentation and interviews uncovered alignment between the project level objectives and the **general objectives** of the CSEP. This was found to be particularly the case for the first and second general objectives “to address target audiences in the EU susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online” and “to provide target audiences with credible alternatives and positive narratives or expose and

⁷³ Most notably in the event: RAN C&N Guidelines for effective alternative and counter-narrative campaigns (GAMMMA+), 31 December 2017, and Issue Paper: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/9d8e7616-d1a9-4ab0-9ef6-8fe1e48427cf_en?filename=ran_cn_guidelines_effective_alternative_counter_narrative_campaigns_31_12_2017_en.pdf

⁷⁴ See best practices to GAMMMA+ from RAN here: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/e17c3ad5-7f9c-42eb-a1be-68c43ed53e65_en?filename=ran_cn_academy_creating_implementing_effective_campaigns_brussels_14-15112019_en.pdf

challenge terrorist and extremist online propaganda”. While this may indicate a high degree of relevance of the projects towards the CSEP, it also uncovered that the objectives were by nature quite broad and accommodating to various interpretations. Indeed, the broadness of the general objectives was not found by stakeholders to be irrelevant per se, but rather that a more targeted approach could help projects be more specific in the activities they carry out. Streamlining the objectives to be in line with the original intentions of the CSEP⁷⁵, could present an opportunity for the programme to increase its relevance and interpretability for future projects.

The **specific objectives** of CSEP were found to be more relatable to project level interviewees, however they were also found to be overly ambitious and difficult (if not impossible) to achieve. The specific objective to halt radicalisation and recruitment processes was perceived as being overly ambitious and difficult for projects to prove that they had worked towards or achieved it. This is particularly so considering the limited degree to which each of the 20 funded projects were able to meet this objective at an EU level. Instead, in the future, the specific objectives could benefit from the inclusion and refocussing towards the two objectives “to grow civic engagement and taking an active stance in democratic processes” and “to enhance (digital) resilience and critical thinking of the target audience” which were found to be the most relevant to project level interviewees. Therefore, the specific objectives of CSEP would benefit from being streamlined and tailored to the original intention of the programme, with an understanding of how projects can realistically work towards such objectives.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 4

- **LL 5.1:** Consider streamlining the general objectives of the CSEP and/or allowing projects to select which one(s) they will aim to achieve. The programme would benefit from having a smaller and more targeted scope, which encourages projects to be more aligned in reaching the same common goals. Using the original mandate of the CSEP as a basis could be an approach towards this. For example, the general objectives could be tailored according to three main elements, including: [1] Encouraging projects tackling radicalisation addressing the extremists’ and terrorists’ continued use of the internet; [2] Supporting the production of alternative/counter-narratives within P/CVE campaign, particularly online; and [3] Support the dissemination and monitoring by civil society organisations, and the evaluation of their impact. Using these elements as a basis could provide greater clarity for projects in how they can support these objectives. Projects could also be given the option to choose between the objectives their project will aim to achieve rather than having to aim to achieve them all.
- **LL 5.2:** Consider adjusting the ambition of the specific objectives towards the level of what projects can realistically achieve. The specific objectives were generally found to be less achievable by projects, thus future CSEP objectives would benefit from being regeared to what projects are realistically able to achieve in the time and resources available. Placing a greater focus on the specific objectives “to grow civic engagement and taking an active stance in democratic processes”, as well as “to enhance (digital) resilience and critical thinking of the target audience”, could act a strong basis going forward (further reflections on future objective setting are presented in Section 4.3.2).

⁷⁵ For example, under the 2018 Annual Work Programme, financial support was made available to projects tackling radicalisation addressing the extremists’ and terrorists’ continued use of the internet, by supporting the production of alternative/counter-narratives, in particular online, their dissemination and monitoring by civil society organisations, and the evaluation of their impact.



Conclusion 6: The majority of CSEP funded campaigns included communication activities that were relevant to the chosen target audience, however, the promotion of activities at the hyper-local level could increase the relevance of future campaigns.

The evaluation found that the majority of CSEP projects included communication activities that were relevant to the identified target audiences. Projects which targeted broad target groups (e.g. “youth” or “those vulnerable to radicalisation”) tended to be able to have communication activities which were relevant to the target groups. However, this approach was not found to generate consistently effective results. Rather, campaigns that tailored interventions to the specific, hyper-local target groups, were found to increase the relevance of a projects’ communication activities. The relevance of this approach was found to be strengthened through in-depth research into the characteristics and demographics of the target audience, allowing the communication activities to be much more tailored, thus increasing their effectiveness and relevance.

Thus, in assessing the evidence of ‘what works’ in terms of successful P/CVE campaigns, the future relevance of programming under the CSEP could benefit from placing a focus on projects that address target audiences at the hyper-local level rather than at the EU level. Given the resources and scope available to projects under CSEP (with an average duration of 26 months and budget of EUR 788,650), it is more probable that successful results could be generated with a much more targeted approach.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 6

- **LL 6.1:** Placing a greater emphasis on projects that develop communication activities geared towards the hyper-local level could enhance the CSEP’s relevance in the future. Future CSEP programming would benefit from emphasising the design and implementation of communication activities that are tailored to target groups at the hyper-local level. This could be actioned through setting clear guidance in the form of examples in the calls for proposals on how such an approach could be designed and utilised in potential campaigns.
- **LL 6.2:** Future considerations should be made on which societal/geographic level (hyper-local vs EU level) should be targeted under the CSEP. The concept note (see Appendix 3) and RAN guidance points to the relevance of supporting communication activities which operate at the hyper-local level. Evidence from the CSEP funded campaigns also pointed to greater results and impact being more achievable through targeted campaigns at the hyper-local level. Thus, if a hyper-local approach was applied in a future CSEP, the programme would need to concede that having objectives situated at the EU level may not be feasible (further reflections on future approaches are presented in Section 4.3.2).

4.1.3. Effectiveness of the CSEP and projects



Conclusion 7: The majority of CSEP-funded projects had a clear vision about the target groups to address, messages to deploy, messengers and channels to use to prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism. However, the majority of the funded projects did not succeed in executing the intended visions and reaching the planned impact by the end of the project.

CSEP-funded projects met the programme requirements in terms of setting up a relevant model of the intervention and targeting the appropriate groups with the communication campaigns. The majority of projects had a good conceptual grasp of what they aimed for

and how they were planning to bring about the change they intended. However, the evaluation found a disconnect between the design and implementation phases. During the implementation stage, the results were mixed and the majority of projects struggled not in finding the right message or identifying whom to engage with, but in delivering these campaign messages to the intended target groups at risk of radicalisation. The fact that there is no substantial knowledge on how the projects dissuaded targeted groups from further radicalisation showed that this data was hard to collect during and/or at the end of the projects. This might also illustrate that communication activities is not a very efficient measure for dissuading already extremist/radicalised persons.

At the same time, it demonstrates that the messages were not crafted in such a way to clearly reach and engage target groups. On the one hand, the reason behind this was the broad scope of the projects and the lack of specific and reachable objectives. Even if the broad scope allowed projects to align with the CSEP programme objectives, it also prevented the direct, niche and targeted intervention to specific target groups through clear, specific messages, mediums and messengers. In this sense, being in line with the CSEP programme objectives did not necessarily make projects effective. On the other hand, the assessment revealed a lack of clarity in how the conceptual understanding of the projects were deploying a coherence approach and producing consistent communication campaigns. There are two reasons why individual-funded projects faced these challenges. The majority of projects did not deliver the communication campaigns based on GAMMMA+ model. Secondly, the capacity of the consortia put together did not had strong communication expertise in the partnerships.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 7

- **LL 7.1:** Projects have to set up narrow objectives and targeted hyper-localised activities with a clear theory of change in mind. This would help projects to implement the communications campaign and reaching the intended impact.
- **LL 7.1:** Projects that intend to deliver standalone communication campaigns should have strong communication campaign expertise and base the model of the action on the communication campaign model.



Conclusion 8: The majority of individual-funded projects' operational framework was based on the model of capacity building and mutual learning projects funded by the European Union rather than a standalone communication campaign model. This was linked to the way the projects were asked to be designed during the call for proposal, which was not aligned with model of communication campaigns based on the GAMMMA+ framework.

The majority of projects funded combined the capacity of different types of organisations, including higher education institutions, private companies, communication agencies, and most importantly CSOs. CSOs had two vital roles in the projects. CSOs were used to reach and engage the direct target groups of projects, and this provided significant input in reaching projects' goals. They were used as amplifiers of the outcomes of the projects. They were targeted with the 'train the trainer' and other capacity-building activities where they were trained on how to identify people at risk of radicalisation, disseminate the outputs created by the campaigns and directly engage the target groups. Engaging CSOs aimed to reach the civic engagement objective of the CSEP programme.

Besides this successful but mostly unintended component of the CSEP-funded projects, a gap was observed in the overall format deployed in the projects. Most projects had a strong component of capacity building. Results showed that most of them saw the communication

campaign as a dissemination action rather than a standalone online product. Even when the projects engaged communication agencies or professionals, the final evaluation found that there was a juxtaposition of the online campaign versus the capacity-building element within the projects. This is relevant both in terms of the design and implementation phases of the projects.

During the design phase, when submitting the application for Call for Proposal (CfP), project consortia were given application templates that followed standard EU calls for funding applications that asked for the description of the overall methodology, and target groups and split the projects into work packages. During the proposal stage, projects thought through the entire model of intervention. Only a few projects revisited their model and redefined them after diagnostic studies or throughout the project implementation. On the other hand, it was found that this application format did not fully comprehend the GAMMMA+ model, which was the essential element to building the online communication campaign and not the capacity building or mutual learning projects.

This indicates that throughout the funding cycle, clarity was lacking in terms of what the CSEP Programme intended to achieve. As the goal was to build an online communication campaign, the results showed that it was not translated into individual projects, and CSEP brought about the unintended capacity-building of CSOs, which corresponds to the title of the programme but does not necessarily match its general and specific objectives.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 8

- **LL 8.1:** Greater granularity and clarity during the design and funding process about the juxtaposition of the online campaign versus the capacity-building element within the projects may have helped to better reach the intended goals. For the projects similar to CSEP-funded actions, there must be a clear idea of what is intended with the programme to be achieved and subsequently, this should be the central judgement criteria when selecting the funding projects.
- **LL 8.2:** Following the clarification of the intended impact of the programme, there should be a tailored application format. This will allow projects to think through in detail the online communication campaign and follow the GAMMMA+ model. The application could be based on the seven elements of the GAMMMA+ model and allow campaign implementors to deliver the intended results within the consistent framework.



Conclusion 9: Although the predominant focus of the programme was on online campaigns, offline activities were used by the majority of projects, and were found to generate greater results. This was particularly the case when on-and-offline activities were combined as part of a given communication campaign.

Findings show that although the predominant focus is on the online campaign, offline activities fill the gap of low levels of engagement in online activities and are viewed to be an integral and supportive part of online campaigns. Interviewees from the funded projects considered that social media can help to capture someone's attention, raise awareness, and give access to certain information to a large target group, but it is much more difficult to engage them only through online channels. In total, 18 out of 20 projects used a combination of offline and online activities. The assessment identified different categories of the projects pursued online, offline or a combination of these two for different reasons. Some of the projects (YouthRightOn, DISCOUNT, CICERO) had a clear preference to engage the target audience and reach the project goals through offline activities as a

supportive action to the online campaign. This preference was based on the idea that offline activities were an opportunity to facilitate an in-depth conversation with the local communities. As pointed out by project partners during the interviews, evidence of change was observed offline in face-to-face interactions.

At the same time, taking into account the overarching findings of this evaluation and assessment of different aspects of CSEP-funded projects, the key assumption here is to consider the limited effects of standalone online communication campaigns and the importance of offline activities. Projects were successful when deploying a holistic approach by bringing strategic communication campaigns and offline activities together as equally integral parts of the project.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 9

- **LL 9.1:** Projects benefited from the diagnostic studies to identify which channels to use to target the intended groups and reach them out directly. The preliminary studies seemed to increase the capacity of the project to better understand the target groups and identify what media and content are consumed by the target audience.
- **LL 9.2:** The evaluation uncovered that projects had a strong preference for a combination of online and offline activities. The results of the projects' evaluations suggested using offline activities to amplify the messages of the online campaigns and bring the call to action intended by the online campaigns.
- **LL 9.3:** Online interventions should not be a 'must-have' of P-CVE campaigning. Project teams should be able to motivate why a certain audience was approached online and through a certain medium, and what specific objective that intervention tries to achieve. This reasoning should be backed up by research on the audience's media consumption habits.



Conclusion 10: The majority of the funded projects managed to clearly think through the messages and write them down in the communication strategy documents. Where projects succeeded comparatively less was creating the communications assets based on these messages, testing the messages before the campaign launch, and co-designing the messages with the target audience.

The majority of the funded projects managed to clearly think through the messages and write them down in the communication strategy documents. Identification of what type of messages were deployed by the campaign was based on diagnostic studies or direct interviews, consultations, surveys, or focus groups with the intended target group. As projects developed the profiles of the target groups, they also identified what the informational needs of the target groups were and used them to draft the messages to resonate with them.

Nonetheless, even if the clear intention and logic behind the messages were there, the projects did not manage to communicate these messages clearly through the communication assets. The majority of the messages, which projects spent a significant amount of time and resources to craft, were lost within the visuals, content and social media overload. This might be connected to the fact that when assessing the messages, the evaluation could not find the clear architecture and hierarchy that was meant to be transformed into online content. There was a disconnect between the conceptual understanding of what to tell target groups and how this was embedded in the communication assets. The evaluation found that these messages were not sufficiently

tested before the campaign launch. Only a few projects had a clear intention in their interventions to test and ensure that the feedback loop was an integral part of the project.

Another element that was poorly addressed in the projects was the use of a participatory approach in the design of the messages. Only a few projects had the co-design element in their operational model. The evaluation found that this improves the effectiveness of the delivery of the messages and brings about the change intended by the projects. It is not fully clear why the projects did not implement the co-design approach. The evidence shows that this element was not implemented because it was not intended in the first place, which means that projects did not fully comprehend one of the main elements of the communication campaign. Missing out on these important elements is yet another example that the actions funded were not primary thought through as communication campaigns and that creating videos and disseminating them online is one, but not a coherent element of a successful communication campaign.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 10

- **LL 10.1:** Projects should have a clear vision on ways to transform them into creative online content without losing their meaning and purpose.
- **LL 10.2:** Initial testing of the messages and communication assets with the target group prior to the campaign lunch is an important step to be integrated into CSEP-funded projects.
- **LL 10.3:** Co-design and participatory approaches to develop the messages of the communication campaign increase the chance of bringing about the change intended by projects.



Conclusion 11: The evaluation shows that, while many project consortia carried out M&E activities, their set of KPIs and approaches to conducting M&E differed considerably, e.g. different units of analysis, and different aspects of performance covered. This makes it difficult to directly compare the performance of projects.

The consortia funded by the CSEP programme took very different approaches to the level of analysis and categorisation of KPIs. Groups of KPIs which were developed for the different projects included, for instance, production, dissemination, awareness, engagement, evaluation instruments, assets produced, and interaction of the target audience with the assets online (e.g. number of views/reactions/comments/shares/saves/etc.), effect of the messages, effect on targeted audience online. In sum, the KPIs developed by the project focused on different levels of analysis, specifically 'inputs' (e.g. production, dissemination), 'outputs' (e.g. evaluation instruments, assets produced, engagement), and 'impacts' (e.g. awareness, effect of the messages, effect of the targeted audience). Ideally, projects should not only rely on measures of performance to evaluate their impact. While this is a starting point, only through measures of effect one can really assess if and whether an attitudinal change was achieved within the target audience (opinion polls, focus groups, surveys, comments to posts etc.). In the specific case of the Breaking the ISIS Brand project, this could have been achieved through strengthening the monitoring and evaluation tools by providing follow-up activities with the target audience aimed at measuring their attitudes and behaviours.

The analysis also revealed the lack of monitoring and evaluation metrics to measure behavioural change among the funded projects. This lack makes it difficult to identify and make tangible the concrete, measured impacts of campaigns.

Finally, quality controlling and pre- and post-testing communication assets should be considered an important step in the design phase of the campaign. Setting up an advisory or quality control board to discuss and approve the campaign content before it is launched can mitigate any backfire effects, such as negative reception or lack of interest/engagement from the target audience. Findings also show that co-designing or pre-testing the communication assets with the target audience is also a useful step in designing the campaigns.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 11

- **LL 11.1:** A robust M&E framework with meaningful KPIs is necessary to ensure that there are clear, tangible results on the campaigns' performance and impact. To ensure this, objectives to encourage behavioural change should be defined in the M&E framework in a way that is realistic and tailored to the target audience.
- **LL 11.2:** A robust M&E framework should also include quality controlling and pre- and post-testing of communication assets to enhance their effectiveness among the target audiences.



Conclusion 12: The analysis reveals that the majority of project consortia conducted the M&E of the projects themselves, creating the risk of bias and limited objectivity on the analysis and presentation of results.

Most consortia (13 out of 20) conducted their project's M&E internally. While the findings suggest that including a partner in the consortium who is specialised in M&E brings indeed added value to capturing the effectiveness of the projects and campaigns, the partner who is responsible for M&E should not be the same as a key organisation (such as the project leader) in the consortium, as was the case in project OPEN. This constellation creates the risk of bias in the M&E and possibly renders results that are not based on entirely objective observations and assessments.

Evidence shows that having a dedicated team of M&E experts in the consortium adds value to the consortium, since it provides better insight into the performance and impact of the projects and campaigns, as reported by the project consortium of Oltre l'orizzonte, for instance. However, the fact that the project evaluator is part of the project consortium can still create a certain bias. To achieve a higher level of objectivity in M&E, another possibility is to hire an external organisation to carry out the M&E activities. This requires close cooperation between the consortia and the external evaluator to ensure that the evaluation remains relevant and useful to the project.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 12

- **LL 12.1:** The findings suggest that, to avoid the risk of bias in the M&E results, an objective evaluator should carry out all M&E activities to monitor and measure the performance, impact, and hence effectiveness of the projects/campaigns and to build a learning system so that learnings are continuously integrated at EU and programme level.



Conclusion 13: The composition of the consortia varied significantly both in the types and number of organisations included, however the lack of experienced consortium partners in P/CVE and digital communications and campaign dissemination was a common problem among the consortia, as the analysis demonstrates. A larger consortium of over 10 partner organisations proved difficult to manage in terms of coordination, communication, and agreement when decisions are made.

While most project consortia varied widely in terms of the organisation types (e.g. universities, NGOs, companies) included in the consortia, the data demonstrates that many of the consortia were small to medium-sized, with about two to seven partners in total. More specifically, nine of the 20 consortia were composed of five or fewer partner organisations in total. By contrast, only three consortia included 10 or more organisations. Particularly large consortia such as Extremely EUnited (13 partners) or CICERO (10 partners) were challenged by the size of their consortia, with regard to the administrative and coordination effort required as well as the effectiveness of the communication among the partners. This evidence suggests that the consortia with three to seven organisations is optimal for the projects that want to maintain strong communication and CSOs that are able to deliver the EU-funded projects but also stay localised and allow local civil society to be engaged in the project.

The evaluation also demonstrated that expertise in both digital communications and online campaigning as well as P/CVE add significant value to the campaign design. For instance, in the project YouthRightOn, a Facebook expert was consulted to help design the online campaign, particularly to narrow down the campaign goal, and this was regarded as a good practice. Interviews with ONarVla consortium members also stressed that including a digital communications company from the beginning of the project was considered vital to the effectiveness of the project. The results show that there were assets that were prepared without communication expertise from the consortium, mainly because of the lack of experience in communication campaigns in the case of many projects, as the analysis shows. In other words, not all projects had involved communication companies. To enhance effectiveness, expertise in digital communication campaigns within the consortia is recommended.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 13

- **LL 13.1:** A consortium of less than 10 partners is at lower risk of being inhibited by slow or ineffective communication, coordination, and administration, which is why such a consortium can enhance their efficiency in implementing the project and campaigns.
- **LL 13.2:** Partner organisations in the consortium who are specialised/have a strong expertise in P/CVE as well as digital communications and online campaigning can enhance the effectiveness and impact of the campaigns.

4.1.4. Efficiency of the CSEP and projects



Conclusion 14: Members of CSEP-funded projects considered that the costs related to project activities were reasonable and proportionate to the benefits which ensued.

Generally, respondents assessed their project as efficient because they reached project objectives at reasonable costs given the results these produced. When looking

at all 20 projects, the budgets differed quite considerably – with higher total costs involved in projects with more partners and more complex approaches to their campaign activities.

No causal relationship was found between the cost of the projects and their effectiveness. Projects that had larger budgets were not necessarily more effective project in terms of their adherence to the GAMMMA+ model, as projects differed in their approach to activities in P/CVE. This stems from differences in: the number of partners involved; the approach to communication activities (i.e. projects that focused on capacity building, projects that focused on disseminating messages through games, and others that had a more traditional approach based messages disseminated through social media, posts, videos etc.); the expertise and experience of the organisations in the consortium (i.e. whether the content was already prepared or whether it was developed from scratch, whether research was necessary); and on the differences in approaching and measuring the effectiveness of activities (i.e. differences in how results were evaluated across projects).

Several factors influenced the efficiency of the observed results, according to the analysis at project-level. The COVID-19 pandemic was frequently identified as a primary cause for inefficiency in CSEP projects because of its impact on the budget, activities, delivery mode and other decisions relevant for the achievement of objectives and deliverables. Consortium collaboration was also a factor that influenced efficiency in some projects in different ways: through a high turnover in personnel that slowed down activities and by having a large number of partners.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 14

- **LL 14.1:** It is important to consider from the beginning what the relation between the budget used and the benefits brought by the communication activities is. Having a thorough evaluation process that establishes clear links between the resources used in a project and a standardised measurement of effectiveness would be key in establishing how efficient the project was. In this sense, having independent external evaluators who consider this relation from the beginning of the project would benefit in offering an unbiased, independent measurement of the budget used and the benefits of the projects.

4.1.5. The coherence of the CSEP and projects



Conclusion 15: The internal coherence of communication activities employed by CSEP projects was considered by projects, while external coherence and synergies with other projects in their region/country was considered to a little extent.

Evaluation findings suggest that the internal coherence of communication activities was high and largely considered by consortia when designing their campaigns. Most projects relied on activities that were connected to each other, whether activities targeting the same audience or different target groups in line with the project objectives. Online campaigns on social media platforms with the messaging sent through posts and videos was combined with other activities. In some cases, educational activities such as trainings were often used as complementary in sending the messages to the audience or groups that interact with the final audience.

Knowledge of CSEP project consortia was rather limited about other initiatives in the field of P/CVE outside of CSEP-funded activities. In addition, there was limited interaction and exchanges that took place between CSEP-funded projects that resulted in synergies between activities in the same region/country. Activities organised by RAN facilitated most exchanges between projects within CSEP, with less interaction externally between organisations and projects funded by Member States.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 15

- **LL 15.1:** Prioritising the creation of synergies from the start of the projects is beneficial for incentivising exchanges and establishing collaborations across consortia in the same region/country. Evidence shows that these exchanges can be better encouraged in an institutional setting from the outset of the projects by discussing what synergies could be developed with other projects and seeking exchanges along those lines. This includes synergies with both CSEP and non-CSEP funded projects.

4.1.6. The EU added value of the CSEP and projects



Conclusion 16: The CSEP and its funded projects were found to have clear EU added value, primarily in supporting organisations in Member States which have limited funding opportunities in the field of P/CVE campaigns.

Across EU and project level interviews, there was a clear perception that the CSEP provided EU added value. Considering that there are no other programmes at the EU level which directly fund communications campaigns in the field of P/CVE means that the CSEP was able to provide targeted support to organisations which may not have access to comparable funding at the national level. Indeed, evidence suggests that there are large disparities in the degree in which Member States both prioritise and fund research and activities in the field of P/CVE. Thus, the CSEP is seen as a bridge to help organisations that may struggle to find opportunities within their own political contexts. EU added value was also found to be generated through the connections CSOs and other organisations were able to gain through taking part in various RAN events, as well as participating in multidisciplinary/ multicounty project consortia. However, it should be caveated that the EU added value of projects is reduced when project activities have a low degree of sustainability (see conclusion 17). Thus, just as the connections and knowledge sharing between CSOs and organisations provides added value, so too should the continuation of successful project activities be encouraged to have long lasting impacts.

The element of cross-border cooperation was noted to have the potential to conflict with campaigns which have campaign designs which are geared towards the hyper local level. As such, if cross-border elements were to be incorporated more widely within future CSEP projects, it is more probable that they would have a greater potential to tackle primary prevention compared to secondary prevention. Thus, in setting a future version of the CSEP, it is important to take into account the emphasis which is placed on cross-border cooperation, what the intended outcome would be, and the impact this would have on the programme's continued EU added value.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 16

- **LL 16.1:** Evidence shows that funding from the CSEP has and would continue to support organisations in national contexts which do not fund activities in the field of P/CVE, if the programme was continued. Considerations, however, should be made to the type of support provided through future versions of the programme and the effect this would have on the programme's EU added value. Evidence suggests that activities or events which enable organisations to share knowledge, network and collaborate together from different countries, contexts and disciplines helps to create a common language in P/CVE work across the EU. Thus, the EU added value of the CSEP would be strengthened through continuing to encourage successful activities to take place. If continued funding after a project is finished is not feasible at the EU level, the Commission should look to sign post funded

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 16

projects to possible national, regional or local level funding, or through other sources of funding that could be available through other means.



Conclusion 17: The perception of the EU added value from CSEP funded RAN events was found to be high, however there is little evidence to suggest the events and materials produced were utilised by CSEP projects.

Results from the participants which were surveyed after the first CSEP funded RAN events showed a strong degree of appreciation, with the majority of the respondents answering that they would apply to the CSEP. Five years since the first RAN event, and almost all members of CSEP projects had attended one or more events organised by the RAN. Despite this, on average, only 15% of the organisations under CSEP projects were found to have taken part in the 11 RAN events that were hosted. Thus, the poor attendance of RAN events can explain, in part, the lack of information and knowledge being utilised within CSEP projects.

Indeed, while the large majority of the feedback received found the RAN events to be very useful (particularly through networking and sharing of knowledge which was facilitated) there was less evidence to suggest that the material and knowledge were actually utilised as part of the CSEP funded projects.

The RAN Communication and Narratives working group has promoted the GAMMMA+ model since December 2017 as a practical guideline for carrying out effective alternative and counter narrative campaigns. Despite this, scorecard analysis indicates that the majority of CSEP projects did not implement campaigns that followed the model in its truest form. While the model is in itself a theory-based model and may not be possible to implement or follow exactly, the evidence still suggests that there are gaps in the knowledge of CSEP projects in how to design and implement campaigns in line with the model.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 17

- **LL 17.1:** Evidence suggests that the RAN events brought about EU added value primarily through facilitating the exchange of knowledge and expertise. This exchange was seen to generate the most positive results both between projects and also through the involvement of large social media organisations. Thus, the continuation of RAN events in the future would continue to support the EU added value of both the CSEP and the projects it funds.
- **LL 17.2:** The EU added value of the CSEP could be enhanced through continuing to sign post and advertise the available knowledge and RAN events available to projects. Emphasis should be placed on encouraging attendance from all funded organisations as well as encouraging project coordinators to distribute information among the consortia if attendance is not possible from all organisations.

4.1.7. Sustainability of the CSEP and projects



Conclusion 18: CSEP projects presented limited evidence of long-lasting effects, however several examples were uncovered of how sustainability could be encouraged in the future.

Sustainability within communication campaigns of the CSEP can be understood as projects which enabled the campaigns and campaign materials to be continually used and absorbed by the target audience after the project had finished. With this in mind, there was mixed

evidence on the degree to which CSEP projects produced effects which lasted after the communication actions had ended. Instead, the projects presented a patchwork of long-lasting effects, with some examples arising of how sustainability could be ensured.

Projects which anticipated and designed how the results of their activities could be taken-up and used after the project was completed was an important element in ensuring the sustainability of outcomes. To support this, projects which included diverse and multidisciplinary consortia were noted to better prepare and measure the sustainability of impacts. This was found to be particularly the case for projects which included organisations which have experience in campaign methodologies and implementation to be enhance both the likelihood of sustainability.

Offline activities were also an important factor in ensuring long lasting results. This was the case due to the exchange of knowledge and trainings that occurred in offline activities which, in several cases, were able to empower practitioners to counter and deter radicalising content/ recruitment processes both on and offline.

Despite this, it should be noted that while material being kept online can be perceived as ensuring long-lasting impacts, they are only long-lasting if there is a continued awareness and sign posting of the material to relevant audiences. In essence, campaigns are only effective and ensure long lasting impacts when the campaign activities are kept running and repeatedly exposed to the target audience.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 18

- **LL 18.1:** Evidence highlighted that, multi-disciplinary consortia, paired with offline activities, generally enabled greater long-lasting impacts. That being said, there are very few examples that were found of how this could be ensured. Future programming would therefore benefit from outlining to applicants the ways in which they can ensure impacts after the campaign had completed. However, this should be paired with the concession that the likelihood of long-lasting impacts is highly determined by whether the campaign continues to run after CSEP funding has stopped.



Conclusion 19: Greater considerations should be made to how campaigns can continue to be supported after the CSEP funding period is over.

Evidence found in the contextual analysis (Appendix 3) emphasised that campaigns can only guarantee potential impacts if the campaign messages and content are still in active circulation. Indeed, interviews (primarily at the EU level) emphasised the need for a holistic approach in terms of the role of CSEP in supporting the ongoing work in the field of P/CVE at the EU and national levels.

One of the main feedback items provided by project level interviewees was that resources and time restraints of the projects (CSEP projects ran on average for 26 months, and with an average budget of EUR 788,650) hindered the ability for long-term impacts to be enabled and measured. This was paired with evidence from the contextual analysis and EU level interviewees which emphasised how short-term interventions do not necessarily enable P/CVE activities to reach their full potential in working towards reducing the spread of radicalising content/ recruitment processes online.

To address the concept of sustainability, the CSEP had been originally created under the notion that it would fund projects which would then be taken up by Member States or national level stakeholders. This notion however was not found to be widely known, particularly among stakeholders at the national and projects funded by the CSEP. While

this notion theoretically appears as a useful bridge for campaigns to be continued, in practice, it could be posited that this approach could potentially lead to further disparities in the support organisations can receive at the national level across all EU Member States. This is due to the fact that continued funding at the national level is greatly dependant on the level of political will and prioritisation for the prevention of radicalisation.

Thus, if no agreements or communication is made between the Commission and Member States of this continued funding intention, then it is important that the Commission are able to sign post possible avenues of funding, be it at the national, regional or local levels. For the CSEP to remain a point of departure for campaigns to be developed, further considerations are needed on how projects can continue after funding has finished.

Lessons learnt (LL) under conclusion 19

- **LL 19.1:** Findings from the evaluation pointed towards there being a gap between funding opportunities after CSEP funding had finished, thus hindering the degree to which campaign effects and impacts can be continued. Greater thought should be put in at the EU level to how CSEP can provide greater opportunities for projects to continue after CSEP funding is provided. Developing greater links with activities at the Member State level could be an avenue for this, however the disparities in political priorities in the field of P/CVE should be taken into account and its impact on projects in all Member States.
- **LL 19.2:** Considerations should be made on whether funding communication activities which are unlikely to/cannot continue after their funding is complete makes sense. Evidence pointed to a low degree of sustainability within the CSEP funded projects, thus future EU initiatives should explore different options in terms of the types of support that the EU could provide to ensure the sustainability of actions funded (further reflections on future approaches are presented in Section 4.3.2).

4.2. Benchmarking

The section presents the benchmarking of the CSEP projects. Benchmarking is a systematic tool to measure the performance of a policy intervention, process, programme, or in this circumstance the communication activities of the CSEP Programme. In many respects the setting up of benchmarks operationalises the findings from the evaluation and aims to ensure that they can be understood and translated appropriately by both practitioners and policy makers. Crucially, the setting up of the benchmarking aims to answer two main questions:

- What are the main best practices from previous communication activities that can act as good practice examples for future campaigns?
- What can future communication activities do to achieve similar and/or better results?

The following matrix presents a list of the main benchmarks uncovered in this evaluation, along with its interconnection with both the phase of the project and GAMMMA+ elements. The table also includes a description of the benchmark, best practices examples from CSEP funded projects and future considerations for policy makers.

Table 4. Benchmarks

Benchmark	Stage of the project ⁷⁶	Relevance to GAMMMA+ ⁷⁷	Description of benchmark	Best practice examples	Considerations for policy makers
<i>Objective setting</i>					
Clear and realistic objective setting	Design	Goal Monitoring and evaluation	The correct setting of any project level objectives is essential, and a number of considerations should be taken into account. Several examples were uncovered in projects which scored comparatively less in the goal element of the scorecard assessment whereby the objectives were not tailored enough to the specific characteristics of the target audience and the communication channels used. Some project objectives were also found to have been overly ambitious or unrealistic. Thus, an assessment should be made in the design of each project on what the objectives should be and how feasible they are to the resources and time available. Establishing a theory of change for the project and campaigns were also seen as an important enabler for the objectives to be reached. Only half of the CSEP projects were found to have developed a theory of change model, with only five of the	<p>Oltre L'orizzonte: Their approach is rooted in sociological theories refined by the GAMMA+ model. According to their theory of change, their objective has never been to change behaviours, rather to shift mentality of young individuals towards second generation Muslims in Italy.</p> <p>Project Grey: Part of its success was found to be due to work that had been carried out prior to the start of the project through the organisation Dare to be Grey. For example, it was noted that Project Grey was seen as a platform to upscale the previous campaign work conducted under the “Dare to be Grey” activities in the Netherlands, to a wider EU audience. Thus, from its inception, the project objectives were set with a clear and tested methodological framework thanks to the work carried out under the Dare to be Grey campaigns.</p>	<p>Application assessments should explore more rigorously to what extent project level objectives are both realistic and clear.</p> <p>Guidance should be given on the setting of the objectives, as well as on how best to build a theory of change.</p> <p>The application assessments should also consider whether applicants provided a sufficient level of flexibility to adapt the theory of change to the findings of the research phase.</p>

⁷⁶ Includes three main phases: Design, implementation and evaluation.

⁷⁷ Includes: Goal, Audience, Message, Messenger, Medium, Action and (+) Evaluation.

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Benchmark	Stage of the project ⁷⁶	Relevance to GAMMMA+ ⁷⁷	Description of benchmark	Best practice examples	Considerations for policy makers
			projects having a theory of change which was sufficiently detailed.		
Use of state-of-the-art information to understand how the project objectives can be successfully implemented	Design Evaluation	Goal Monitoring and evaluation	Just as the project level objectives should be clear and realistic, so too should the objectives be based upon state-of-the-art information. This can be broken down into two levels. The first level is the use of “known” and available information that can be gathered with regards to the development of campaign designs and approaches that can have the potential to be successfully implemented. The use of RAN guidance is a notable wealth of information, presenting detailed information on how campaigns can be designed. The second level is information which is specific to the target audience and may not be easily available. For this type of information, a diagnosis study or assessment has proved effective in providing a strong foundation on which campaigns can be designed. Both levels of information should be used together in the development of the project level objectives.	<p>RESET: One of the project partners which specialised in psychology conducted an in-depth study into the diagnosis of the target audience. The results from this proved to be very important in the development of the campaign material, in reaching the target groups and increasing the credibility of campaign. This research also had a bearing on the projects ability to meet its objectives.</p> <p>PRECOBIAS: The project’s objectives and goals of the actions are clearly described. The campaign rests on the assumption that an innovative user-centred perspective is needed to prevent radicalisation and the goals and objectives attempt to respond to a number of challenges that have been raised in existing reports. The project rests on thorough scientific research on cognitive biases in general, and the cognitive biases that are powerful pull factors in extremist online content in particular.</p>	<p>Signposting of information should be encouraged and actively promoted at the application and implementation stages of projects. The proposal assessment should consider how this information is being incorporated in the proposals.</p> <p>Training with strategic communications experts may be provided to support the project beneficiaries at different stages of the project implementation, also on-demand.</p>
Activities					
Designing both on- and offline	Design	Messenger	Research points strongly to the benefits of including online and	Oltre L'orizzonte: The project included both on and offline activities. The coherence	The promotion of the use of online and offline communication

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activities and ensuring synergies between each other		Medium Action	offline campaign activities as part of projects. This was confirmed in the evaluation of campaigns which found that 18 out of the 20 projects included offline activities. Indeed an important element of ensuring impacts were translated at the local or “target audience” level was the use of offline activities. The use of pre-established contacts or networks of grassroots organisations was noted to be particularly important in the design of the offline activities to ensure that activities are sufficiently tailored. Another crucial element was ensuring synergies between online and offline activities. Indeed, for several of the projects, there tended to be a preference for one or the other, thus impacting the degree to which both sets of activities are complementary.	<p>between the two was ensured throughout the project by the evaluation team (Social Hub) who ensured that the various phases of the project organically interrelated and informed one another. The same partner also readjusted the theory of change after the research phase.</p> <p>(Re)Think: 71 outreach activities – to NGOs, schools and religious communities - were initially planned offline, but were run through online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Online outreach activities and workshops worked well in countries where the project partners had existing networks. For example, one of the project partners worked with an existing network of schools and could easily set online activities up. The outreach activities which were the most difficult were those targeting religious and local communities “they were more closed and harder to reach”.</p> <p>Project Grey: The online and offline activities were complementary and had strong synergies. This was due to the findings and lessons learnt from the online campaigns being directly used in the training of social workers, who could then prepare similar campaigns within their own networks.</p>	<p>activities should be actively encouraged.</p> <p>An emphasis should be placed on projects which have the ability to successfully implement on and offline activities, through having a project consortium which has relevant expertise in both areas as well as contacts and networks for offline activities.</p> <p>However, the application assessment should verify that online activities are justified against specific objectives/target audience and are not a mere ‘nice-to-have’ to achieve high measures of performance.</p>
Involvement of multiple disciplines in the development of the campaign activities	Design Implementation	Audience Message	The inclusion of a multi-disciplinary project consortium was found to have an important bearing on the degree to which campaign activities could be tailored to the specific contexts of the campaign. For example, projects that included expertise in psychology and the characteristics of the target	D.O.B.T.: In terms of the behavioural change aspects, extensive research was carried out by the project in the inception stages. This research helped to define and shape the project design and helped to target the material to the specific needs of the target audiences in each of the target countries. This research was circulated to members of	Multidisciplinary project consortia should be encouraged and supported in future funding opportunities. In particular, extra points should be given to consortia that include communications agencies and CSOs in the partnership.

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			audience (i.e. through the use of CSOs) were noted to have been of particular benefit to the refinement and tailoring of campaign activities. This knowledge was found to be complemented from expertise in communications and P/CVE campaigns, to enable insights to be practically implemented and realised.	the project consortium and facilitated the development of the campaign activities. Project Grey: From analysis of the organisational set-up, the project utilised the ideas and campaign designs through the Dare to be Grey organisation. The campaign activities were then realised through the support of one of the project partners and the use of Big Data, which was used to translated concepts that could be translated and digested by social workers in the development of their own campaigns.	
Utilisation of (online) communication activities which present personal stories that are relatable to the target audiences	Design Implementa- tion	Audience Message Messenger Action	Within the online realm, campaign activities which utilised personal stories that are relatable to the target audiences was found to generate greater impacts. Notably, both online distribution of short videos and in-person awareness raising sessions were found to be important in campaign activities. In addition, the combination of videos with reflective exercises from educational material that was developed was also found to be more effective than just the online materials alone.	COUNTER@CT: Both the online distribution of short videos, and the in-person awareness raising sessions, were seen to be important to the campaign. The communication activities themselves consisted mainly of video testimonies made by migrants and refugees all made in the native language of each person sharing his/her story and subtitled in Portuguese, Spanish, English and French – shared through social media more generally as well as through targeted social media groups.	Projects should be assessed against the latest standards in social communications. Evaluators should be scoring the emotional value of the communications activities and measure the impact in terms of attitudinal change.
Target Audience					
Clear understanding of the target audience and their rational and emotional needs to tailor	Design Implementa- tion	Audience Message Messenger Medium	The complex nature of the radicalisation process and the absence of common pathways among those becoming radicalised challenges the identification and understanding of the target audience.	DECOUNT: The target audience was defined and described based on exhaustive qualitative research on the trajectories of radicalised people, the socio-political issues that confront them as well as their ideas about current and future socio-political roles.	Emphasis on the importance of designing and implementing campaigns based on knowledge of specific target audiences' demographics, interests and rational and emotional needs and concerns. Attention should also

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compelling message and campaign activities	Monitoring and Evaluation		Nevertheless, campaigns should strive to reach an understanding of the specific target audience as research emphasise the importance of tailoring P/CVE campaigns (message, messenger, medium and activities) to specific, hyper-local target audiences. This requires a deep understanding of not just the demographics of the target groups, but also their interests, concerns and rational and emotional needs. Knowledge and understanding of the target audience should be reached by means of multiple approaches, e.g., desk research, available statistics, surveys, qualitative interviews, and involvement of parties with hands on experience with the target audience. Moreover, the definition of the group that a project is actually reaching to the extent possible (including age, gender and other relevant variables) as well as consumption habits constitutes the basis for M&E. In addition, projects should, where possible, consider whether outcomes differ significantly by different characteristics among the target group.	Oltre L'orizzonte: The rational and emotional needs of the target audience were identified through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and sociolinguistic analysis of online material stemming from social networks.	<p>be paid to the research backing the project understanding.</p> <p>Each project should set a target group at the project design phase and confirm whether the group actually reached matches the intended target group – and if so, with a consideration of why the actual target group differs.</p> <p>Ensuring an efficient and secure exchange of information with the project partners to share valuable insights on the target audience that they want to target, so as to align national priorities with project objectives.</p>
Direct involvement of CSOs and expertise in	Design Implementa- tion	Audience Messenger	Research emphasise that the effectiveness of P/CVE campaigns depends on a granular and contextual	COUNTERACT: The involvement of local civil society actors working with refugees and migrants in a specific community brought a	Inclusion of requirement in future call for proposals to involve local parties (e.g., CSO's, frontline workers) actively in describing,

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defining and reaching the target audiences		Action	understanding of the target audience, that cannot be achieved through desk-research or surveys alone. Therefore, the coordinating organisation should involve relevant CSOs and other parties with experience with interacting with the target audience (e.g., teachers, social workers) in defining and reaching the target audience.	<p>greater understanding of the issues facing the target group.</p> <p>DECOUNT: CSOs were key members of the consortium and acted as entry points to the target audience.</p> <p>D.O.B.T.: CSOs provided local knowledge to the research on the characteristics of the target audiences.</p>	understanding and assessing the target audiences.
Messages					
Tailoring messages directly to the known characteristics, context and needs of the target audience	Implementation	Audience Message	Understanding the characteristics, needs and motivations of the target audience is key to formulate relevant and meaningful messages which resonate with the target audience. Universal messages which do not account for the specific context and characteristics of the target audience (e.g. age and/or language appropriate) are doomed to fail at engaging the intended audience.	<p>Breaking the ISIS Brand Narrative: The messages were tailored to a high degree as a lot of research using primary data from interviews with ISIS and Al-Shabab returnees, defectors and prisoners was undertaken which facilitated a better understanding of factors and drivers, as well as push and pull factors of ISIS. Furthermore, the returnees act as credible messengers for the target group.</p> <p>YouthRightOn: The messages chosen were based on the diagnostics study where young people from the sample and who participated in the focus groups were asked for suggestions for the alternative narratives. Therefore, the message was tailored to what other similar young people think.</p>	The involvement of the target audience in the formulation of the message should be ensured as part of the methodology of the project.
Thorough testing of the messages with the target groups	Design	Audience Messages	The development of a methodology to test the messages with the target group prior to the launch of the campaign is crucial to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Involving the target group in the	RVIEU: The testing of the campaign, through the involvement of representatives of the target audience, contributed to the improvement of the design of the campaign and hence, its relevance. Moreover, it enabled the identification of potential risks	Ensure that the involvement of the target audience in the testing of the message prior to the launch of the campaign is maximised through, for instance,

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			testing of the campaign, not only contributes to its finetuning but also supports the preliminary assessment of its impact. Moreover, it allows to identify potential risks which may have gone unnoticed to prevent “backfiring” effects.	<p>which were accounted for in the design of the campaign.</p> <p>Counteract: Messages were tested through an informal workshop with young migrants and refugees, but also with young Portuguese, to gather their perceptions on the campaign before and after going public, thus to enable a level of assessment of the impact of the campaign on their views about the process of integration and possible grievances.</p> <p>Project Grey: Testing of different types of content was conducted before the start of the campaign, including the target groups' assessment of the appropriateness of message and messenger.</p>	<p>the organisation of focus groups and/or workshops.</p> <p>Make sure that there is a process in place to incorporate the testing results in the final message.</p>
Monitoring of the messages and adapting to the changing needs of the target audience	<p>Implementation</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation</p>	<p>Audience</p> <p>Messages</p> <p>Messenger</p> <p>Evaluation</p>	As important as testing the campaign with the target audience prior to its launch, regular monitoring of the messages at the implementation stage is important to ensure that the campaign continues to be relevant to its target audience throughout time by making adjustments (if needed) which can increase its effectiveness by reaching and engaging a higher number of people.	<p>Project Grey: An innovative and successful part of the campaign approach was the inclusion of Big Data analysis, supported with additional funding and support directly from Facebook. While other campaign designs may test the messages before launching the campaign, Project Grey were able to continuously adjust the project messages, adapting to new trends in discourse, thus making the campaign more relevant and engaging.</p> <p>D.O.B.T.: On a monthly basis, the consortium would review the data from the social media postings, along with the KPI's and looking at which messages had more traction, and which did not.</p>	Projects should envisage the monitoring of the messages throughout the implementation of the campaign to be able to make adjustments if needed and show that there is a process in place to make it happen.
Inclusion of both rational and	<p>Design</p> <p>Implementation</p>	Messages	The combination of both rational and emotional components has proved to maximise the impact of the message amongst the	Oltre l'orizzonte: The message content was rational as it included real-life experiences of the target audience. When it comes to the emotional side, the presence in the	Encourage the formulation of messages with emotional and

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emotional messages			target audience. For instance, the inclusion of “real-life experiences” to which the target audience can relate proved to be key for the success of the message.	<p>partnership of the comms agency was crucial to craft a product that was appealing, triggering and provocative. Furthermore, the theatrical piece, being based on life stories and direct testimonies of situations of discrimination or exclusion, was of great emotional impact.</p> <p>RESET: Campaign content (i.e. videos and posts) had a mix of rational and emotional content as many were based on testimonials. Interviews with project staff uncovered that some of the videos were well received in the Facebook community, however due to the topic, the engagement was low. Despite this, it was emphasised that a mix of emotional and rational messages was found to be one of the most efficient ways to promote change and impact.</p>	rational components to maximise the impact of the message
Communication channels					
Research into the use of media by the target group accompanied by insights from CSOs	Design Implementation	Audience Messenger Medium Action	To target the campaign, it is important that the selection of communication channels and design of the communication strategy is based on knowledge of the target audiences’ media use: which media do the target audience prefer, how do the target audience use the media to seek information, communicate and interact with other users, and what role do their media use play in their offline lives? In building the knowledge base, it is relevant to draw on existing research as well as insights from members of the target audience, CSOs and other actors with first-	<p>Counteract: The primary media of the target audience (Facebook, Instagram and YouTube) were identified through a combination of input from the involved organisations, civil society contacts, feedback from the target group, and the expertise of the communication partner.</p> <p>Oltre L’orizzonte: In the design phase, the project engaged members of the target audience in discussions of the choice of communication channels.</p>	Ensure that the projects root their understanding of the target audience in granular analysis of their media consumption habits, and that the choice of the project communications channels is relevant to the analysis.

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			hand experience with the target audience.		
Use of voluntary and paid support from social media outlets	Implementation	Medium	Support from social media platforms such as social media paid ads, not only enables campaigns to reach and hyperlocal target their audience but also helps to monitor the profiles consuming this content and to potentially derive conclusions. Moreover, data analytics tools and insights (e.g. Hootsuite, Google Analytics, Hootsuite Analytics, Facebook Analytics, Instagram Insight, Twitter Insight tools) are used to measure the impact of social media channels and online posts.	<p>CICERO: Paid promotion on FB and IG worked, especially in terms of generating awareness, although not so much in terms of generating engagement. The advantage of paid promotion is that FB provides a way to do this in a very targeted way by specifying age ranges and geographic locations.</p> <p>DECOUNT: The use of paid ads to reach – 91% of the users of the game were reached through paid ads - and target the intended audience proved to be a good practice to increase the reach of the communication assets and monitor the profiles of the audience consuming this type of content to potentially derive conclusions.</p> <p>Breaking the ISIS Brand Narrative: Facebook ads resulting from the previous cooperation with Facebook were deemed beneficial by the team (i.e. ICSVE had cooperated with Facebook in the US prior to the application to CSEP).</p> <p>PRECOBIAS: The frequent use of Google Analytics to analyse the reach of the campaign and engagement of the target audience (included metrics: number of visits, where visitors are coming from, bounce rate, average time spent on page, landing pages specific evaluations, how visitors found the website, what keywords were used, users' behaviour on the website) and advertisement budget.</p> <p>D.O.B.T.: Facebook was further used for monitoring and real-time/live to inform online outreach, communication and campaign activities, to maximise impact and reach to</p>	Provide the possibility to pay for sponsored content to maximise their opportunity to reach the intended group.

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				relevant stakeholders and target audiences. This involved using Facebook 'Boosts', target audience specification on all social media channels, improving quality of delivery and language, and other means.	
Use of a diverse spread of social media outlets and credible messengers well-known to the target audience	Implementation	Medium	Despite differences in the effectiveness levels of different platforms, the use of a diverse spread of social media platforms proved to maximise the reach and engagement levels of the target audience. Moreover, the inclusion of ambassadors and/or influencers to disseminate the message contributed to the relatability of the message.	<p>Oltre l'Orizzonte: Looking at the outputs and media, they were very diverse thus maximising the possibility to reach different secondary target audience and increasing the possibility to make an impact. Moreover, the idea to involve famous artists either as ambassadors or as creators of project activities further increased the possibility for the project to obtain a wider reach and get to be known by the artists' followers/fans.</p> <p>DECOUNT: Moreover selected "gamers" who are well-known to the target audience were selected to stream the game in "streaming" on Youtube and Twitch. According to interviewees and as confirmed during the quantitative evaluation, the streaming of the game on Youtube and Twitch was very successful at reaching the intended audience (i.e. youth).</p> <p>YouthRightOn: One of the factors that the project team identified as having contributed to the effectiveness of the project was the influence of social media influencers and vloggers. The Diagnostics study found that the influence of vloggers, activists, and celebrities over opinion formation on important social issues among young people seems to play a role in increasing receptiveness towards far-right messages.</p> <p>(Re)Think: Interviewees reported that Facebook was the more effective social media channel for outreach, and also that</p>	<p>Assess the grounds on which projects opted for certain social media and how this choice relates to the analysis of media consumption habits of the target audience, as well as objective of the campaign.</p> <p>Encourage the use of ambassadors and influencers through the possibility to remunerate them.</p>

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				results improved notably, when all channels were used to promote the project's videos and content.	
Project partnerships					
Development of a project consortium which is diverse and rich in expertise	Design	Impact on all elements of GAMMMA+	Crucial to the success of any project and communication campaign is a consortium which is diverse and rich in expertise. Most notable types of consortium members which proved to provide the most added value was local CSOs with experience in grassroots activities (in each country where target group contact is to occur), connections to target groups and ability to facilitate offline activities; partners with a strong communication profile (including expertise in social media campaigns); and partners with expertise/experience in PVE/CVE.	<p>(Re)Think: Partners highlight the effectiveness of the project consortium, a multi-disciplinary team of: corporate digital media specialists, academics from Lusófona and Uppsala universities and CSOs practitioners from CESIE, PATRIR, CAPRI and SVF with deep knowledge of target communities and ability to reach out to them.</p> <p>D.O.B.T.: The project operated with a well-defined team of seven partners that brought complementary skills to the project, including project management, PVE/CVE, social media, data analytics, and monitoring and evaluation. During the project, cross-partner training was conducted on designing and implementing PVE/CVE campaigns, which built capacity among the partner organisations, particularly in relation to communication skills.</p>	<p>Inclusion in calls for proposal of requirements that partnerships should include organisations with a collective combination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connections to/ proven ability to reach the target group - Communications expertise, including design of social media campaigns if relevant to programme - expertise relating to PVE/CVE. <p>Guidance for how partners can strengthen each other through cross-partner training within the project.</p> <p>To facilitate the consortium building process a marketplace platform could be set up as it happens for other EU funded projects, or the latter be signposted and available for CSEP applicants too.</p>
Definition of the partnership model and allocation of clear roles	Design Implementation	Impact on all elements of GAMMMA+	Effective project implementation requires that the partnership agreement states – and that partners understand – their responsibilities and roles in relation to project outputs. It may be helpful to distribute project	Precobias: In a consortium that partners said worked well, each partner had a clear role: collaboration with CSOs ensured effective, direct contact to teachers and social workers and the possibility to test and validate content. The channels and content targeting teachers and social workers were	Provide guidance to facilitate a direct dialogue about expected roles and responsibilities during the initial project meeting(s), including by recommending that these are discussed from the outset and that roles are clearly

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			responsibilities relatively evenly among different partners, though this will depend on their expertise and intended role within the project.	managed and updated in turn by all partners according to a specific calendar and following an editorial plan produced by the coordinator. The editorial plan provided guidelines about where to post, the topics to be covered, and the kind of content to share. The online campaign targeted at young people was managed by one of the partners (the Human Rights Institute, SK) with the help of the coordinator. The other partner organisations were provided with the access credentials to post on behalf of the project.	set out and defined in the partnership agreement.
Effective and transparent communication within the consortium	Design Implementation	Impact on all elements of GAMMMA+	It is also helpful to clarify procedures for resolution of any potential disagreements that may arise. This is particularly important where a project 1) involves many (e.g., 5+) partners, and/or where partners have no previous experience of collaboration or EU project partnerships. Furthermore, clarity of partner responsibilities and roles is promoted by regular meetings and effective written communication throughout the project period.	n/a	Award extra points to projects that include a dispute resolution system in their application. Provide guidance on communication and conflict resolution within projects in a fixed format such as a written or digital guide or tool, and ensure that the programme coordinator or another organisation related to the programme makes consultation available in cases of disputes over project methods, output or financing that cannot be resolved between the partners. Consider whether to limit the number of partners (for example, to under 10).
Monitoring and evaluation					
Selecting clear and applicable KPIs, including	Design Implementation	Monitoring and evaluation	In selecting KPIs for the output of a campaign it is important to consider the clarity and applicability of the KPIs, since	PRECObIAS: In the design phase, one or two KPI's were set for each of the project's objectives. By means of Google Analytics, the KPI's were monitored frequently during	Inclusion of requirements in future calls for proposals for a stringent and detailed approach

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measures of KPIs	Evaluation		<p>this is the basis of stringent monitoring that can be used to adjust and improve the campaign during the project period. A KPI should provide information about, e.g., the reach of the campaign, the target audience's and other stakeholders' engagement with and support of the campaign, and thus help the campaign staff to prioritise resources to adjustments.</p> <p>A mix of quantitative and qualitative KPIs is recommendable, since neither can cover the reach of, engagement with and support of the campaign alone.</p> <p>Furthermore, KPIs for outputs as a measure of performance should not be mistaken for measures of effect. While a large number of e.g., views and downloads seem impressive, it is better thought of as a measure of immediate output (e.g., reach) but does not tell us much about attitudinal or behavioural change.</p>	<p>the life span of the project, and the actions of the campaign were adjusted according to difficulties to reach the KPI's. Measures included, among others, number of visits to website, how visitors found website, bounce rate, average time spent on website.</p> <p>(Re)think: The monitoring of the campaign included a mix of quantitative and qualitative KPIs for output. The latter covered evaluation of comments, shares and retweets, and content analysis of continuous engagement. In particular, attention was paid to engagement with the projects' videos and online content, including analysis of negative comments.</p>	<p>to the design of both quantitative and qualitative KPIs for output.</p> <p>Further guidance on how the monitoring and evaluation of KPIs for output can be applied in the ongoing adjustment of campaigns to reach objectives.</p> <p>Guidance on the pyramid of change and how to translate the four subphases into clear, measurable and applicable KPIs for output, outcomes and impact.</p> <p>Ensure that KPIs are coupled with measures of effect to capture the campaign's behavioural change.</p>
Choose / develop few good measures of outcome on an individual level	Design Evaluation	Monitoring and evaluation	<p>The evaluation of the projects under the CSEP programme clearly shows that data collection among the target audience (young people vulnerable to radicalisation) is often a huge challenge, and that it can be impossible to measure</p>	<p>Oltre l'orizzonte: The project applied the pyramid of impact to establish a set of qualitative and quantitative measures and methods to address expected outcome in four subsequent phases (perception, awareness, involvement, change). Whilst data concerning perception and awareness were collected from the available analytics</p>	<p>Inclusion of requirement in future calls for proposal to collect comparable baseline and endline data on outcome on an individual level.</p> <p>Further guidance on how to develop measures of outcome</p>

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			<p>some longer-term outcomes during the project period. Therefore, it is important to use M&E resources wisely:</p> <p>Clarify from the start which attitudinal and/or behavioural outcomes to expect and how to measure them. If available, use existing measures of attitudinal and/or behavioural change, as this will channel M&E resources to data collection (e.g., recruiting focus groups, follow up on response rates).</p> <p>Prioritise a single or a few good outcome measure(s), as this will make it more realistic to collect enough data to judge the campaign's outcome.</p> <p>Collect comparable baseline and endline data on outcomes.</p>	<p>and specific analyses, information and data about engagement and change were explored by means of focus groups, interviews, and sentiment analysis (applying data mining and Natural Language Processing to collect and analyse large volumes of online text for the prevalence of keywords, phrases etc.).</p> <p>PRECوبياس: The summative evaluation of the project employed a survey experiment in order to assess outcome in terms of the target audience's knowledge of biases and mental processes as well as increased self-awareness of biases.</p> <p>YouthRightOn: The project included an online survey conducted before launching the campaign. The survey covered, among others, attitudinal indicators. The final evaluation asked questions similar to those asked in the baseline survey which to some degree allowed for comparison and thus analysis of attitudinal change. One of the changes was registered in the willingness of youth to report aggressive/hateful online content.</p> <p>GAMER: The project evaluators used an analytical tool for the game to record decisions that players make during game play, which gives insights into their moral compass. Furthermore, the project applied an experimental neuropsychological assessment to observe whether the game had a direct effect on people's moral behaviours, responsibility and empathic response towards others by using a randomised controlled evaluation (half of the people received the game developed by the GAMER project, while the other half received</p>	<p>that are both relevant in relation to the programme and campaign's objectives, and measurable.</p>

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				<p>another similar game, Space Riding Vikings). By analysing brain imaging after the participants played the game and were put in front of a pro-social task, it was possible to observe whether more players in the intervention group than in the control group showed willingness to act pro-socially.</p> <p>Project Grey: Shift from 'polarised' to 'grey' debate among target audience was monitored using text analytics (including sentiment analyses) on comments, discussions and reactions around the published products.</p>	
Enable partner organisations to contribute to monitoring & evaluation of outcomes	Implementation Evaluation	Monitoring and evaluation	Monitoring/ evaluation of outcomes can be promoted – particularly in instances where partners, rather than the coordinating organisation, have contact with the target group -- by equipping partners, incl. CSO partners, with descriptions of metrics and guides on how to assess them. This requires the coordinating organisation to provide ongoing support to the partner organisations and follow-up on the progress of data collection during the project.	RAGE: Outcomes of the call to action were monitored by the project partners (involved NGOs) – this was enabled by the coordinating organisation distributing both metrics and guides on how to use them to carry out evaluations to the NGO partners.	<p>Provide more stringent requirements on the partnership composition, including indication for all partners to contribute to the M&E exercise.</p> <p>Ensure guidance to the evaluators on how involving smaller partners in the evaluation exercise with the least impact on their capacity.</p>
Impacts	Design Implementation Evaluation	Monitoring and evaluation	Projected/ desired impacts (long-term outcomes, often at the community or societal level) can be formulated at a higher level, on the basis of existing knowledge/research. However, the formulation of KPIs associated with project outputs and outcomes (i.e.	n/a	Encourage the formulation of realistic M&E plans that refrain from stating KPIs for long-term/broad/high-level impacts but focus on output and outcome KPIs which are realistic and feasible to measure the project period.

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Benchmark	Stage of the project ⁷⁶	Relevance to GAMMMA+ ⁷⁷	Description of benchmark	Best practice examples	Considerations for policy makers
			shorter/medium-term) need to be realistic and feasible within the project period.		Design follow-up plans to ensure that long-term impacts are ensured.
Prioritise ongoing and formative evaluation	Implementation Evaluation	Monitoring and evaluation	<p>Projects should plan monitoring and evaluation activities throughout the life of the project, where possible incorporate learning into subsequent project activities, for example by:</p> <p>Conducting an assessment of output and, where possible, short-term outcomes, during the project – if possible making learning available to involved organisations through dashboards or regular consultations.</p> <p>Consulting with members of the target group during the project and incorporating input into subsequent activities</p> <p>Including input from evaluators in project planning and adjustment, where relevant</p> <p>Incorporating learning from ongoing assessment into the design of subsequent activities</p> <p>Updating the M&E plan during the project as adjustments are needed</p>	<p>Oltre l'orizzonte: M&E was a key component of the project from the design phase onward, and an M&E plan was in place before the start of the project. It was updated after the first research phase, supporting identification of relevant metrics. In addition, the evaluation team accompanied internal decision making throughout the project, helping to adjust the project approach based on insights gathered. The use of monitoring mechanisms to assess project activities--such as focus groups –not only helped with evaluating the project performance but also generated new insights to support further project activities.</p> <p>Extremely EUnited: As regards formative evaluation and learning during the project, roundtable discussions with the participation of partner organisations were held in relation to each of the campaigns. Minimum two roundtable discussions – one in the middle and one in the end – were held in relation to each campaign. The purpose was to debate and analyse the campaign's impact.</p> <p>Breaking the ISIS Brand Narrative: Each campaign (video) was monitored and evaluated before the next one was run, and learning (e.g., about whether to run the same videos across countries) was incorporated into the following campaigns. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of all the campaigns was also conducted at the end of the project.</p>	Tenders should require external evaluators or partner organisations to conduct an evaluation.

Benchmark	Stage of the project ⁷⁶	Relevance to GAMMMA+ ⁷⁷	Description of benchmark	Best practice examples	Considerations for policy makers
				<p>ONarVia: Based on the Periodic Report and interviews, part of the evaluation of the training packs was a qualitative evaluation before implementation (focus groups), a quantitative measurement before the start of the project (surveys; baseline measurement), and a quantitative measure in the middle and final stage of the project. The results of this evaluation showed that the needs of teachers remained fairly stable over time.</p> <p>Project Grey: Insights on the output of the campaigns were fed back into the campaigns. They developed pipelines to harvest data from social media (Twitter, YouTube and Facebook) and implemented anonymization strategies based on graph technology. This was implemented and integrated in an online dashboard showing trends and topics located on national and local/regional level. This information was used to choose the focus for the campaign. The dashboard was adjusted to the local situation of the social workers participating in project Grey, including whether it was worthy to act online or offline.</p>	
Programme level: Support stringent, comparable M&E across projects	Evaluation	Monitoring and evaluation	<p>While programmes should enable a wide variety of projects and activities, requirements/recommendations for M&E should include:</p> <p>specific concepts for which KPIs should be set, including shared definitions of concepts (such as reach, etc.) to be assessed</p> <p>specific and sufficient budget allocation for M&E activities</p>	<p>RAGE: The project included an evaluation plan with multiple methods, to be used to conduct ongoing progress monitoring and mid-term and final evaluations, and an external evaluator was engaged to conduct the project evaluation.</p>	Percentage of M&E budget should be referred to in the tender specifications.

Evaluation of impact and effectiveness of counter- and alternative campaigns stemming from the CSEP programme aiming at preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism

Benchmark	Stage of the project ⁷⁶	Relevance to GAMMMA+ ⁷⁷	Description of benchmark	Best practice examples	Considerations for policy makers
			establishment of milestones/ dates at which the M&E plan will be considered and, if necessary, adjusted		

4.3. Reflections from the evaluation

In conducting this evaluation, several reflections can be made on the role of (online) campaigns aiming at preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism, as well as the role of the EU as a policy actor in this space. While the evaluation was predominantly conducted ex-post, the study also sought to develop key lessons learned and guidelines for the future (see sections 4.1, 4.2 and the accompanying guidelines). To complement these forward-looking aspects of the study, several reflections can be provided on the future of EU support in the area of P/CVE, and the inherent challenges therein. These reflections do not represent policy recommendations, but rather considerations and points of reflection for a future design of the CSEP.

To structure these reflections, three key areas will be discussed: [1] the inherent challenges of P/CVE work, [2] enhancing the role of the current CSEP model, and [3] considerations for the future role of the EU in this field.

4.3.1. The inherent challenges of EU support in the area of P/CVE

Addressing target audiences in the EU which may be susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content, those on the brink of radicalisation as well as those who have already been radicalised is an inherently difficult challenge, both from a policy and practical perspective. As part of this study, a concept note (see Appendix 3) was developed to outline these main challenges and assess the approaches made thus far in the field of P/CVE.

The first overarching challenge begins with the known phenomenon that there are no linear pathways, nor fixed set of characteristics, that uniquely explain individual vulnerability to radicalisation and engagement in violent extremism⁷⁸. Indeed, many of those who have been involved in terrorist activities in recent years were found to belong to heterogeneous social backgrounds while undergoing diverse processes of violent radicalisation and being influenced by various motivations⁷⁹. In turn, the existence of a specific “terrorist personality” - characterised by mental and social fragility, abnormality or irrationality - associated with engagement in violent extremism and terrorism - has been excluded in literature⁸⁰.

Thus, any work to try and combat and prevent radicalisation at any geographical level (local, national and EU levels) is an inherently difficult task. At the same time, however, these challenges should not deter the motivation of practitioners and policy makers to actively work and support continued efforts to dissuade those susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content, particularly online.

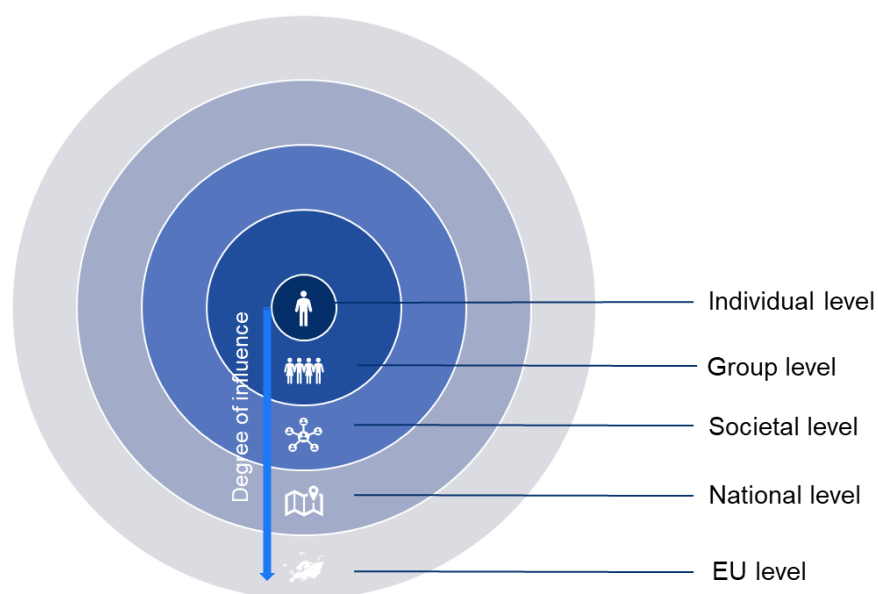
Within this overarching challenge are a sub-set of equally difficult challenges. These sub-challenges are situated at different societal levels, from the individual to the EU level (as visualised in the figure below).

⁷⁸ Harper, E. (2018), Reconceptualizing the drivers of violent extremism: an agenda for child & youth resilience;

⁷⁹ Europol (2020), European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report; Europol (2021), European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report

⁸⁰ Bigo, D. et al. (2014), Preventing and countering youth radicalisation in the EU, Document requested by the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE); Schmid (2013)

Figure 24. Visualisation of the main challenges in P/CVE at the local, national and EU levels.



- **Individual level:** This level focuses on the factors of significance to the individual's risk of or vulnerability to radicalisation. This level is invariably one of the hardest levels for targeted P/CVE campaigns to reach due to the challenges of identifying those who are at risk of radicalisation, and then trying to influence their behaviour. Gaining access to this level requires in-depth knowledge of the target audience, the context (e.g. political, societal or personal) in which they live and the possible influences a person may be under to radicalise. Despite these challenges, reaching this level provides the greatest opportunities for behavioural change, dissuading people from becoming radicalised.
- **Group level:** This level focuses on the dynamics and factors of significance to the emergence and maintenance of extremist groups, as well as groups' ideologies and narratives and their recruitment, propaganda and communication. Like the individual level, the group level poses a number of challenges for P/CVE campaigns, such as requiring local knowledge of group contexts and dynamics. That being said, with greater prevalence of group ideas within society comes greater opportunities for campaigns to target likeminded individuals.
- **Societal level (local):** The local or societal level pertains to the general societal dynamics and factors in the surrounding society that are of significance to extremism. Research rejects that socio-economic disadvantage in itself causes individuals or groups to be radicalised. Most individuals experiencing socio-economic disadvantage do not become radicalised. However, socio-economic disadvantage can aggravate perceptions of injustice and discrimination on individual, group or international level, and hence play a role in radicalisation. In many respects, understanding this level can act as a gateway for access to the group and individual levels.
- **National level:** This level primarily pertains to the contexts at a national level which can influence extremist tendencies which could lead to radicalisation. Conducting P/CVE campaigns at the national level can be politically challenging due to varying political and socio-economic contexts. Similarly, there is an inherent challenge to support P/CVE work at the national level while addressing other national priorities related to radicalisation (i.e. tackling de-radicalisation).
- **EU level:** This level is the furthest removed from the individual level and represents the efforts made at an EU level to influence the work conducted to prevent

radicalisation. This level presents the opportunity to coordinate an integrated and multinational response to the prevention of radicalisation, aligned with the EU values of promoting tolerance and EU/democratic fundamental rights. That being said, there are inherent challenges when operating at the EU level. Being further from the individual level presents challenges in ensuring that funded campaigns and actions are indeed targeting the most relevant people. There are also political challenges in the EU supporting regional or local campaigns while ensuring subsidiarity within Member States.

The points above outline the inherent contextual, political and technical challenges that campaigns, funded at the EU level, face when trying to dissuade people who may be susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content. The following section aims to explore the main overarching considerations for the future of EU support in tackling these challenges.

4.3.2. Overarching considerations for the future

Across each of the evaluation conclusions and lessons learned presented above, several overarching considerations should be taken into account in the future design and scope of actions at an EU level to prevent radicalisation. The challenges listed in the section above (see section 4.3.1) should also be weighed together in the decision-making process. These considerations are set out in the following points:

Consideration 1: What is the strategic direction of the Commission in preventing radicalisation, and what type of support should be provided?

As a first point of departure, it is important for the Commission to explore the types of support it could provide. A useful point of departure in this reflection process is to consider whether it makes sense to continue to fund such communication campaigns at EU level, or whether future support would be more effective if it took the form of the funding of capacity building activities or projects. Indeed, capacity building activities within projects were broadly found to have been effective, particularly through training activities with local actors (e.g. teachers, social workers and local CSOs). Thus, it may be relevant to consider providing a separate line of funding support to such initiatives, rather than funding them within campaigns which operate with a different mandate and approach. In addition, irrespective of the strategic approach adopted, it is also important for the Commission to effectively communicate to stakeholders the vision of a future initiative as the evaluation of the CSEP pointed to a lack of awareness of CSEP's vision for how long-term impacts and sustainability could be ensured.

Consideration 2: At which geographical level should the EU intervention provide support?

This includes weighing up whether the Commission should aim to target campaigns which operate at the hyper-local level or any other geographical/societal level (see Figure 24). Indeed evidence from the evaluation outlined that campaigns which tailored interventions to the specific, hyper-local target groups, were found to have communication activities that were more relevant and effective. The Commission, however, also included elements within the CSEP which aimed to be implemented at EU level (e.g. introducing the concept of cross-border collaboration). Thus, the Commission should explore whether providing much more targeted support for campaigns at the hyper local level makes more sense, or whether support should continue to be provided at the EU level, but more from the perspective of capacity building activities and operational support (as suggested above).

Consideration 3: Who should be the direct target audiences of EU funded campaigns?

This critical question calls for the future CSEP programme to have a forward-looking approach regarding the direct beneficiaries (e.g. the target audiences of the campaigns).

The evidence shows that the majority of projects placed a strong emphasis on tackling religious radicalisation, with the focus of the projects mostly being on radicalisation stemming from Muslim communities. Therefore, the direct beneficiaries (target audience) could broadly be seen as the Muslim community members. Only a few projects planned to tackle political radicalisation or single-issue radicalisation (see Figure 5). But even in those projects, the radicalisation of Muslim communities became a critical topic during campaign implementation.

When carrying out the post-campaign testing, the evaluation recruited a similar target audience to that of what a selected eight projects managed to recruit in their own testing activities. The recruitment showed a strong emphasis and bias towards young Muslims and second-generation citizens. As pointed out in the findings section (see Section 3.1), this evaluation found that projects were relevant to the time when they were funded. Contextually, it is important for a future EU initiative to take into account the turbulent political and societal shifts in Europe.

Consideration 4: How should CSOs be included in a future initiative?

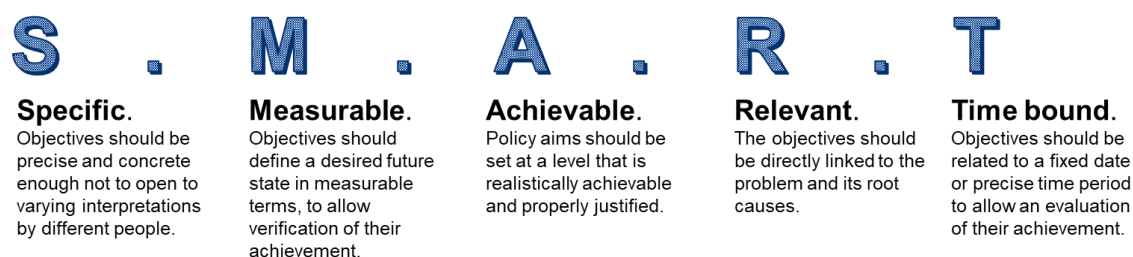
Based on the decisions made under consideration one, reflections should then be made on who the target beneficiaries should be. The CSEP was conceived as pilot programme to test how the Commission could empower CSOs as part of communication campaigns to prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism. The evaluation found that CSOs were primarily “empowered” through their role as knowledge brokers and practitioners between projects and local contexts. Indeed, CSOs were found to be most effective as key messengers and acting as bridges within target communities, not as project coordinators or communication campaign specialists as originally intended. Thus, as in consideration number one, it is important for future EU support to weigh up [1] which type of support should be provided (e.g. communication campaigns or capacity building activities) and [2] who are the most appropriate actors to be supported as a result.

Consideration 5: At what level of ambition should the future objectives be set?

As a first point of departure, considerations should be made on the level of ambition of a future initiative tackling the problem of radicalisation. Taking into account the inherent challenges of the prevention of radicalisation (as shown in section 4.3.1) a future initiative should weigh up the needs at different societal levels to help prevent radicalisation within communities against the scope and mandate of the EU to uphold the values of promoting tolerance and EU/democratic fundamental rights while maintaining subsidiarity. This level of ambition should also be aligned with the decisions made in relation to whether a future initiative should be focussed on funding communication campaigns or capacity building (or potentially both in two separate funding streams).

Once the level of ambition of the future initiative has been set, it is important that the setting of any objectives are S.M.A.R.T, as outlined in the figure below.

Figure 25. S.M.A.R.T. objective setting⁸¹



⁸¹ European Commission (2021). Better Regulation Guidelines toolbox. P.109

The evaluation found that each element of the S.M.A.R.T. approach was lacking in the current CSEP objectives. The general objectives for example were found to be relevant, however the objectives were not specific enough, and led to different projects having different interpretations of how the objectives should be implemented. Evidence from the evaluation also pointed to the specific objectives of the CSEP being overly ambitious and difficult (if not impossible) to achieve. The specific objective to halt radicalisation and recruitment processes was perceived as being overly ambitious and difficult for projects to prove that they had worked towards or achieved it. Thus, considerations should be made on how future objectives can be achieved by beneficiaries, and in which ways they can measure achievement.

Consideration 6: Should a future EU initiative follow the same approach as the CSEP, several different characterises of successful project should be taken into account.

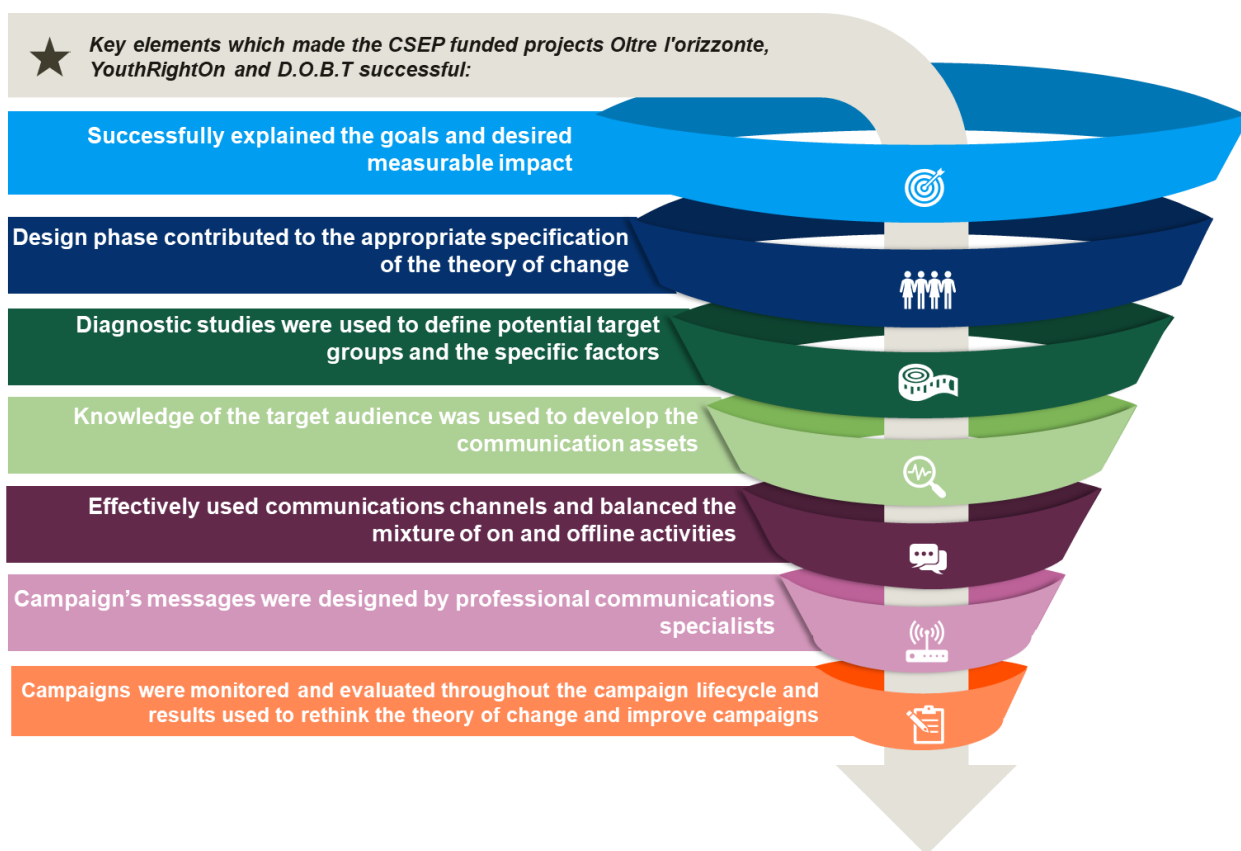
Results of the scorecard assessment highlighted the lessons learnt in the CSEP-funded projects and best practices stemming from their communication campaigns. The evaluation showed that several considerations could help CSEP-type funded projects to succeed, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 26. Considerations for future projects



In addition, the scorecard assessment helped to highlight good practice examples of CSEP-funded projects. Among the most successful projects Oltre l'orizzonte, YouthRightOn and D.O.B.T. achieved the highest scores. The aforementioned projects were at least 68% effective in determining and communicating the goal, targeting the audience, tailoring messages, choosing the appropriate channels and monitoring and evaluating the outcomes.

Figure 27. Key elements which made the three highest scoring projects Oltre l'orizzonte, YouthRightOn and D.O.B.T successful:



Consideration 7: Should a future EU initiative continue to focus on funding communication campaigns, considerations should be made on who the programme would support

After considering the level of ambition for the future, a decision should be made on what type of partnership and model of cooperation should be supported by a future EU initiative (like the CSEP). Evidence suggests that CSEP-funded projects struggled to achieve the intended results of their campaigns without a solid expertise in communication campaigns. The use of the GAMMMA+ model (see description in the glossary on page ix) as a best practice reference point for communication campaigns was not absorbed and utilised by projects as its uptake required communication expertise. Small CSOs involved in the projects did not have this expertise or capacity to absorb it, despite training provided through the CSEP and by RAN. Despite this, CSOs were essential to ground the communication campaign at the grassroots and bring the communication material closer to individuals and their community members. This shows the importance of the small CSOs within individual-funded actions and the need to enhance communication expertise in future projects. Based on the level of ambition of the CSEP, future projects would need to be co-led by communication agencies. Grassroots CSOs should be involved and complement the communication expertise with their knowledge of communities at the local level.

Consideration 8: Were a future EU initiative to focus on capacity building, considerations should be made for how CSO's at all societal levels can be supported

Another essential consideration is what type of support CSOs at the local level would need to be able to implement and achieve the objectives of a future EU initiative. CSOs played an important role in CSEP projects - primarily by bringing the communication materials closer to target groups, as well as creating platforms and giving a voice to community members. The findings from the evaluation show that small CSOs struggled to implement CSEP-funded projects. These CSOs did not have the expertise to carry out communication

campaigns and/or could not manage transnational projects. Several areas have been identified where CSOs would need to be further empowered to achieve the objectives of the CSEP (see section 3.2.1). For example, CSOs need to be supported in their endeavour at the local level when implementing community actions. CSOs were proven to be an asset when increasing a sense of belonging, tackling grievances, and acting as mediators with local community members. Thus, a future EU initiative could recognise the role of CSOs in preventing radicalisation and primarily support them through capacity building activities, rather than indirectly through communication campaigns.

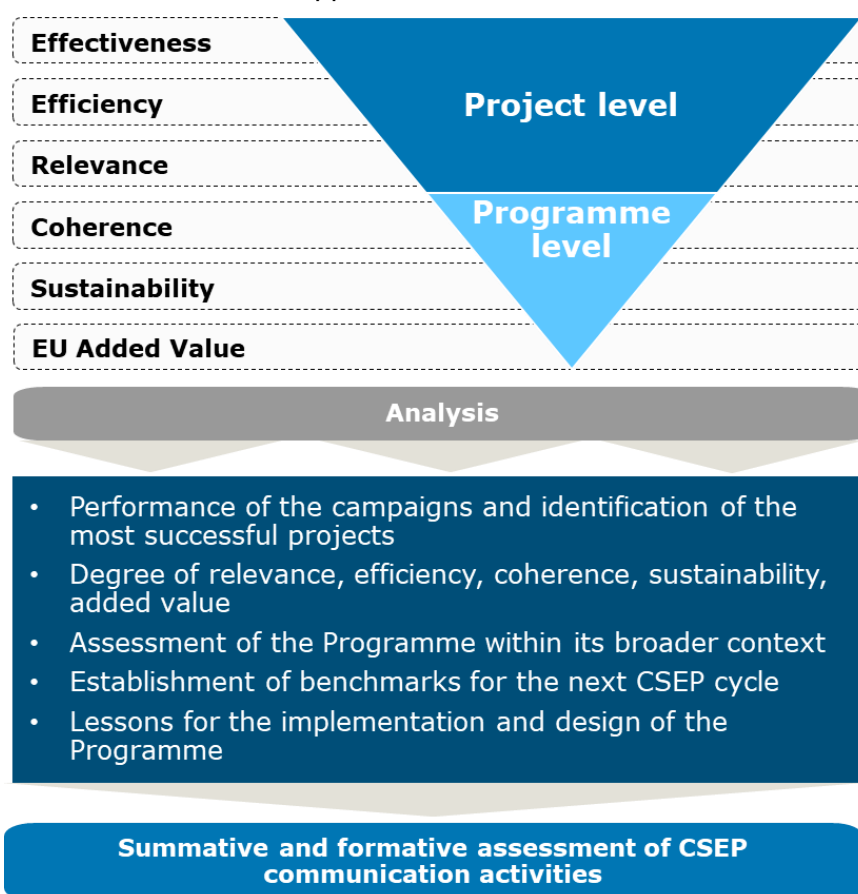
Consideration 9: Will the support from the Commission be coherent with existing EU level initiatives in other Directorate Generals as well as initiatives at the national level?

As with all EU policies and programmes, it is important that a future EU initiative ensure that the support provided is coherent with other ongoing EU initiatives. Indeed, the thematic areas in the field of radicalisation include (but are not limited to) target audiences in the EU which are susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online, promoting tolerance and EU/democratic fundamental rights and values, grow civic engagement and take active stance in democratic processes by target audiences and enhance (digital) resilience and critical thinking. While most of these areas are fall under the competence of DG HOME, the aspects relating to hate speech, protection of societal groups from online content and growing civic engagement are covered across other DGs within the Commission.

Appendix 1. Methodology

This appendix presents the methodology that was used as part of this evaluation. The evaluation performed an analysis of the communications campaigns performed by the projects under the CSEP programme as well as evaluating the Programme itself and drawing conclusions and recommendations, based on six evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, EU-added value and sustainability. In order to do so and provide a robust evidence-base for the evaluation, the study relied on the use of sound evaluation techniques, in line with both the European Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines⁸² and DG COMM guidelines to evaluation⁸³. The figure below provides an overview of the evaluation approach.

Figure 28. Overview of evaluation approach



The approach can be characterised as follows:

- **An intervention logic** to present the theory of change of the CSEP (see Figure 2).
- **A detailed evaluation matrix** which operationalises the evaluation (sub-)questions, and sets them out against the indicators and judgement criteria (see Appendix 2)
- **A mixed methods approach combining a qualitative and quantitative focus.** Quantitative data was gathered from available project reports. This data was summarised, and primarily concerns reach and engagement indicators. Additional quantitative data was gathered through surveying the project target groups in a selection of projects. Due to the type of intervention the quantitative data was

⁸² European Commission (2021). Better Regulation Guidelines: Commission Staff Working Document, SWD(2021) 305 final

⁸³ Directorate-General for Communication (2017). Toolkit for the evaluation of the communication activities

complemented by qualitative indicators stemming from the following fieldwork exercises:

- **An in-depth desk-based review** and a thorough assessment of all 20 projects funded by the Programme as part of a campaign mapping and analysis exercise (see desk research section below and the findings from the scorecard analysis in Appendix 4).
 - **A consultation approach** which ensured that the views of all relevant stakeholders are considered, primarily through EU level and project level interviews to gather more in-depth information on the impact of the communication activities of the Programme. Across the two types of interviews the study foresaw to speak to over 100 persons. Familiarisation interviews also took place prior to these consultations.
 - **A campaign post-testing exercise** was carried out on 8 campaigns to assess the effectiveness and impact of the campaign messages. It should be noted that the exercise target the target audiences that the projects defined for themselves. As such, many of the projects do not target individuals “being radicalised” but rather at *risk* of radicalisation. Thus, we seek to understand the behavioural levers that the projects could activated to prevent radicalisation, and use this as framework for the assessment of the campaign materials. The focus of this sub-task was to supplement the project-level interviews and desk research from the target audiences directly. Depending on the activities of the CSEP-funded projects, this was done through a combination of qualitative small online community discussions for 6 projects with 50 participants total, and quantitative polls for 2 projects with 1,500 survey respondents. In both study methods the exercise tested campaign assets directly. The proposed selection criteria for the projects, which were assessed under the campaign post-testing exercise, is presented in the following methodology section. The results of respondents' opinions on each tested asset were synthesised with the findings described mainly in the effectiveness section. Post-campaign testing analysis was also used to refine the key conclusions and lessons learnt in the project.
- An approach that assesses the CSEP Programme at two levels – programme and project level:
 - At the *programme level*, a desk-based review of secondary data was combined with the interview data from EU level stakeholders and project coordinators, to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, sustainability and EU added value of the Programme.
 - At the *project level*, campaign mapping as part of the desk research was paired with post-campaign testing to primarily provide evidence to the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency questions.
 - **A scorecard approach was used to synthesise evidence at the level of each project.** The scorecard approach defined for each of the evaluation criteria a set of judgement criteria based around the GAMMMA+ model prepared by RAN that would be applied to each project. The population of this scorecard led to aggregated scores per project to be produced
 - **Combination of the summative and formative elements** described previously to assess the Programme and draw lessons learned for the future.

Study phases and tasks

The study followed three distinct phases as presented below.



Phase 1 - Inception: In this phase, the intervention logic and evaluation questions matrix were refined and acted as the building blocks of the evaluation. In addition, preliminary research was conducted through the form of desk research and familiarisation interviews.



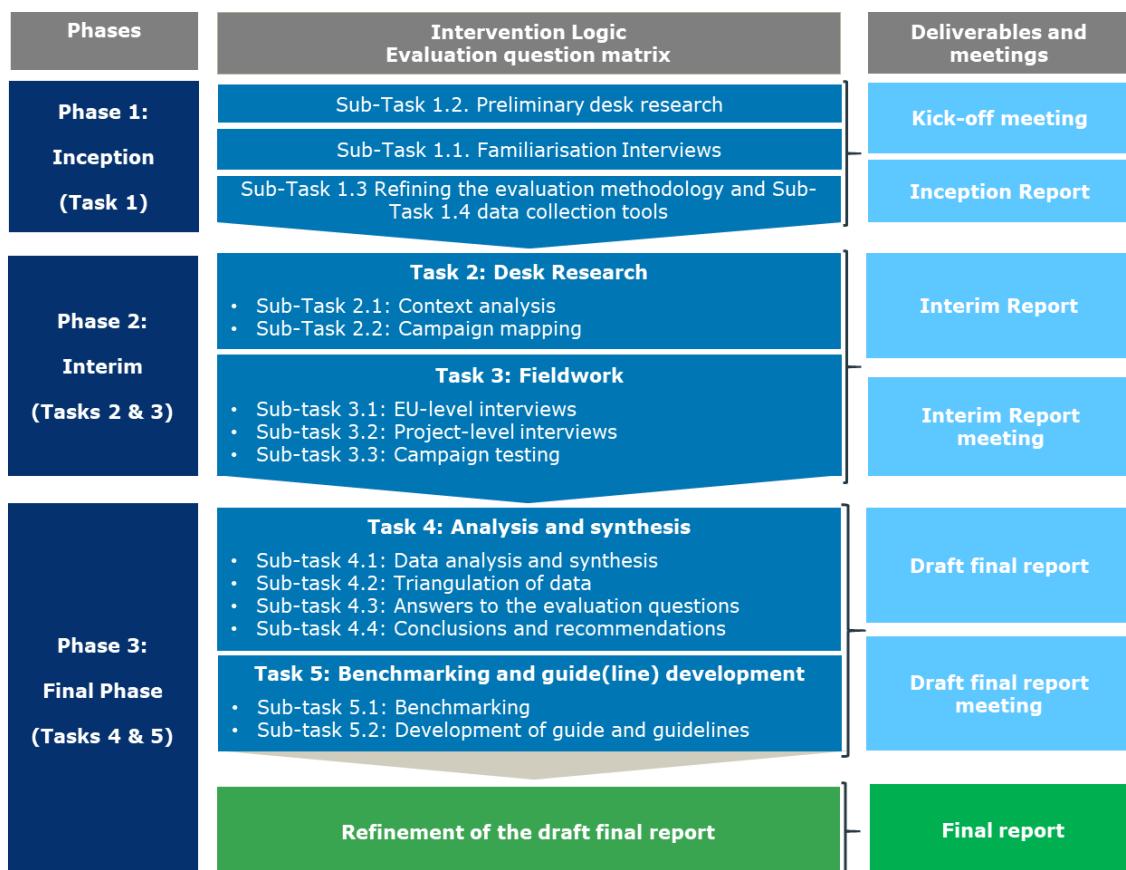
Phase 2 – Interim: This phase was the core of the evaluation process and included a full desk review, targeted interviews, and campaign testing. The evidence gathered in this task fed into the final phase and sought to answer the evaluation questions.



Phase 3 - Final: This phase triangulated the findings from phase 2 and formed the basis of this evaluation report. The task took into consideration the outcomes of the feedback provided by the Steering Group following the outcome of the interim and draft final reports.

The figure below provides a graphical representation of tasks one to five and lists the relevant sub-tasks and subsequent deliverables and meetings.

Figure 29. Overview view of study tasks



Task 1. Inception phase

Kick-off meeting

A **kick-off meeting** was held online nine weeks after contract signature, on 21st February 2022.

Prior to this, an **internal kick-off meeting** took place involving all relevant team members to prepare the work to be undertaken in the inception phase and to ensure that the core team involved in the inception phase shared a common view of the objectives of and approach to the evaluation.

Preliminary desk research

In order for the Study Team to develop a sound and thorough overview of the projects funded by the Programme, as well as the context of the Programme in general, relevant documentation was reviewed as part of the inception stage, including:

- Policy documents (legislative proposals and legal texts)
- Project documentation
- Academic and research literature
- EU level studies and literature (i.e. research conducted by the RAN network)

This preliminary desk research primarily gathered data on the implementation of the communication activities, while also serving to develop a better understanding of the context in which radicalisation thrives, examining the main push and pull factors and drivers. One important component of the preliminary desk research was to conduct an initial review of the project documentation, which would assist in the refinement of the scorecard assessment.

Familiarisation interviews

The Study Team conducted seven familiarisation interviews with representatives of DG HOME and key stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the CSEP programme along with the campaigns it financed, as well as gain further insights on expectations in relation to the study. The interviews helped to refine the study intervention logic and evaluation matrix, the consultation approach, and the project selection criteria for the post-testing of campaigns.

The following table presents the interviewees that were consulted during the inception phase.

Table 5. Overview of interviewees for familiarisation interviews

Stakeholders	Theme	No. of interviews
RAN network	RAN contributions to CSEP programme	2
DG HOME	CSEP programme and projects	2
HERA (formerly DG HOME)	CSEP programme	1
REOC communications	CSEP programme	1
Meta (Facebook)	CSEP programme	1
Total		7

Refinement of the evaluation matrix

The preliminary desk research and initial familiarisation interviews helped the Study Team to refine the evaluation question matrix (EQM). In line with the changes to the intervention logic⁸⁴ (see section below), the study team further refined the evaluation matrix which operationalises the evaluation questions that the study served to answer by reviewing the sub-questions and indicators.

Refinement of the intervention logic

To further refine the intervention logic, two methodological steps were taken in the inception phase, namely:

- Use the results of the seven familiarisation interviews
- Carry out a preliminary desk review of available project documentation, presented in the paragraphs below

These two research activities validated and further expanded the information and causal links in the intervention logic (see Figure 2). At this stage, all elements of the intervention logic were reviewed, taking into account the limited information available. In particular, some additional information was included in relation to inputs, activities, outputs, results, and impacts segments.

Development of data collection tools

On the basis of the revised intervention logic and finalised evaluation matrix, as well as the comments received from the Commission during and further to the kick-off meeting. The section below provides a summary of the main considerations which were taken in the development of the different tools.

Task 2: Desk research

Task 2 involves the desk research component of this study. This task aimed to gather and analyse data derived from a variety of secondary sources, ranging from legal and policy documents to programming documents, to project-level documents (i.e. GAMMMA+ and technical specifications). The data fed into answering the evaluation questions, including looking at the main achievements from the different campaigns which were funded by the Programme.

Across all of the desk research activities, the completeness of the data was sought to be assessed to determine whether there were any data gaps and inconsistencies which may require further data collection. Specifically, the conduction of such a gap analysis provided an indication of relevant missing information, which will require pointed investigation throughout the stakeholder consultation activities. In addition, importance was placed on maintaining the confidentiality and security of the data and information collected.

Task 2 was structured according to a two-fold strategy to maximise the use of available data and set the foundations for consecutive Tasks. This approach is further explained in the following sections.

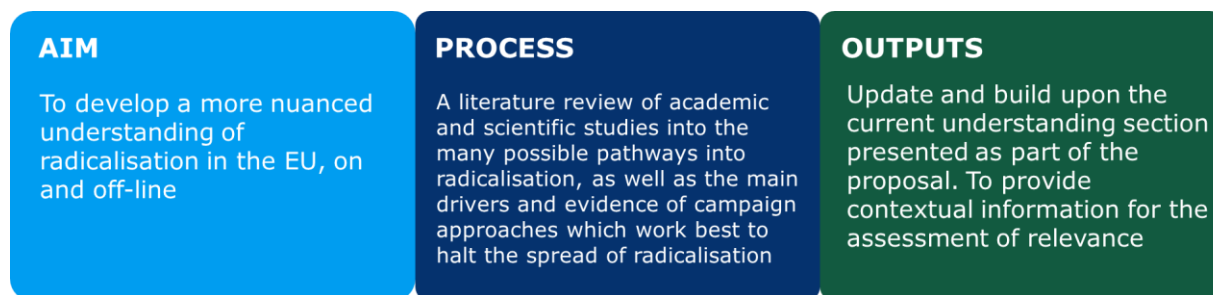
Contextual analysis

The contextual analysis focused on the broader, policy and research sources, such as policy documentation (i.e. EU level strategies in the prevention of radicalisation and extremism) and academic studies and reports. This review was conducted with the intention

⁸⁴ These minor changes included the separation of the operational objectives per action type.

of understanding the questions of what, why, who, how of radicalisation and looking to understand whether what the CSEP programme has sought to do is relevant (i.e. by targeting the correct target audience through the correct mediums) and has the potential of being effective (i.e. whether the correct processes have been followed). Examples of relevant/effective initiatives/campaigns undertaken in EU Member States and third countries was also intended to be identified as part of this task. The contextual analysis process is summarised in the figure below.

Figure 30. Process of the contextual analysis



The contextual analysis was divided across three main guiding questions, following the rough structure of the concept note:

- What are the current trends in radicalisation in the EU?
- What are the main drivers or pathways into radicalisation?
- What are the main responses to counter radicalisation – what works, what does not?

Across each of the research questions, the data collected (both qualitative and quantitative) as part of this desk-based review was coded and analysed using qualitative data analysis techniques and used as preliminary evidence to answer the evaluation questions, on the basis of the indicators set out in the evaluation matrix. The results were collated as part of a concept note and is presented in annex to this final report – see Appendix 3.

A full list of sources that were consulted is presented in Appendix 7.

Campaign analysis

The second part of the desk research constitutes the main part of task two and involved conducting an in-depth mapping and analysis of the campaigns funded by the Programme. This sub-task was adapted as part of the Interim phase, primarily in the logic of streamlining the work carried out, of which the following approach was adopted:

- The campaign analysis was streamlined through combining the project mapping tool and the excel based scorecard. This was done in the logic of removing the need for project documentation to be reviewed twice under each of separate tool. As a result, a consolidated scorecard “database” was adapted to include 220 questions which each of the projects were assessed against, covering questions from the EQM (primarily for the criterion of Effectiveness and Relevance) and questions in relation to the GAMMMA+ model.
- The scorecard database enabled a transversal analysis across the campaigns (i.e. looking at how a given campaign element – for example a given campaign goal, tool or target audience – is covered across the campaigns). To ensure the consistency and quality of the data entry process, a quality check-in was organised among Study Team members twice during the desk review stage.

The scorecard database includes an analysis of the main project documentation that was provided to the Commission in each project. On average, the amount of project documentation that was reviewed per project was between 10 and 15 documents (approx.

200-300 documents consulted in total). This primarily included the following types of documentation:

- The grant agreement,
- The final periodic reporting (if the project was complete),
- Monitoring and evaluation reports,
- Campaign design material,
- Campaign assets (i.e. the communication activity outputs)
- Inception, interim and final reporting documents

As in the case of the contextual analysis, where gaps emerged in the project level scorecard database, any missing information was prioritised as part of the project level interviews and populated back into the scorecard to try and ensure data completeness as much as possible. The scorecard analysis allowed for a “score” to be given to each project, which enabled the identification of poor, medium and good practice. It should be noted that this analysis does not intend to “spot-light” specific projects as being particularly successful/unsuccessful, but rather act as a tool to identify specific aspects of project practices which either worked or did not work.

Further information on the methodology behind the scoring of projects as well as the analysis of top-level results can be found in Appendix 4.

Task 3: Fieldwork

The purpose of this task was to collect primary data from the main organisations engaged in the projects as well as from the audiences targeted by the campaigns. The task combined interviews with EU and project level stakeholders, and case studies of selected projects focusing on their relevance and effectiveness and testing their messages through qualitative group discussions, polls and/or observations.

This fieldwork task was a key source in providing insights to answer the evaluation questions and complement the evidence gathered as part of the desk research (Task 2).

EU level interviews

Through this sub-task a series of EU level interviews was carried out. The purpose of these interviews was to help answer evaluation questions related to coherence, relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency. The interviews were semi-structured and tailored to the roles and responsibilities of EU-level interviewees.

The interviews were undertaken after the desk research (Task 2) had been completed. Therefore, the EU level interviews questions were informed by a detailed mapping of CSEP messages, activities and channels used. The EU level interviews also primarily aimed to gather expert feedback on state of the art evidence regarding communications and C/PVE actions to assess the extent to which there is a match between what the projects have been doing and what the experts see as effective or not-effective approaches to preventing radicalisation.

The table below provides an indicative list of the types of stakeholders that we propose to interview at EU level and the topics that those interviews will help us address. The assistance of DG HOME and other Steering Group members will be required in helping to identify relevant interviewees for each of these categories.

Table 6. EU level interviews

Stakeholder	Foreseen number of interviews	Number of interviews carried out
DG HOME	3	1
Contractor for the Radicalisation Awareness Network and other RAN representatives	3	2
ESCN experts and partners	2	2
FRA	1	-
EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator (CTC)	1	-
Member State representatives	3	2
Academic experts and researchers	2	3
Total	15	10

Project level fieldwork

A key component of this task was an in-depth review of each project which will be combined with a selection of interviews for each of the 20 grants. For each project, the following activities were carried out:

- Review (or prepare) a project specific intervention logic based on a combination of desk research and interviews; and
- Undertake at least 4 interviews with the organisations involved to delve into questions relating to the effectiveness of the project, but also its relevance, efficiency, EU added value and sustainability.

In total approx. 80 interviews with the different organisations involved in CSEP projects were foreseen to be undertaken.

Project level intervention logic/ theory of change

Based on detailed review of the material for each project and building on the interviews carried out as part of this step, the intervention logic or theory of change was reconstructed for each project. This was paired with a narrative as well as a graphical presentation of the intervention logic for each of the projects.

This will also demonstrate which of the CSEP programme level objectives the grant aimed to address. The team prepared an intervention logic for each grant, building on the information collected through the desk review carried out in the previous task (Task 2). The intervention logics were validated during the project-level interviews and further revised on the basis of these and/or with the information gathered through the case studies.

Interviews with project stakeholders

The interviews with project stakeholders sought to mainly cover the criteria of effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, EU added value and sustainability, covering the following key areas:

- Overall **effectiveness** as well as the effectiveness of the messages, activities and channels, partner organisations
- **Relevance** of the project to the target group and relevance to local context
- **Efficiency** of the projects and whether there was room for efficiency gains

- Overall **EU added value** of the projects as well as the EU added value of the training(s) and peer sessions
- Degree to which the **sustainability** of the projects has been considered/ensured

The table below presents the number of interviews which were conducted with each project.

Table 7. Number of stakeholders interviewed by stakeholder group and organisation

Stakeholder group	Project	No. of in-depth interviews foreseen	No. of in-depth interviews
Project-level <i>Including coordinators, campaign designers, M&E experts, partners</i>	Counter narrative Campaign for prEventing RadicalisatiOn (CICERO)	4	5
	Preventing and combating online radicalisation (Counteract)	4	2
	Do one brave thing (D.O.B.T.)	4	4
	Promoting democracy and fighting extremism through an online counter-narratives and alternative narratives campaign (DECOUNT)	4	3
	EUROTOPIA	4	1
	Oltre l'orizzonte. Contro narrazioni dai margini al centro	4	6
	Project Grey: Building the Middle Ground	4	4
	Radical Awareness Game Engagement (RAGE)	4	2
	Preventing and countering extremism and radicalisation: an action plan for Portugal (RESET)	4	4
	(Re)think Before Act – Alternative Narratives to Violent Extremism	4	3
	Resonant Voices Initiative in the EU (RVIEU)	4	3
	Resilient Youth against Far-Right Extremist Messaging Online (YouthRightOn)	4	4
	Leveraging the pOtentialities of New media and Proactive	4	3

Stakeholder group	Project	No. of in-depth interviews foreseen	No. of in-depth interviews
	CSOs and grass root movements to overcome Islamic radicalization online (open)		
	Extremely EUnited: Prevent Radicalization among Youth	4	3
	COMMunication campaign against exTremism and radicalization (COMMIT)	4	4
	Breaking the ISIS Brand Counter Narrative Project	4	4
	Prevention of Youth Radicalisation Through Self-Awareness on Cognitive Biases (PRECOBIAS)	4	3
	Concord: Narrating Alternatives to Radicalisation (Concord)	4	3
	Online positieve narratieven ter preventie van radicalisering in het Vlaamse onderwijs./ Online positive narratives for the prevention of radicalisation within Flemish education (ONarVla)	4	4
	Generating Awareness to Mitigate Extremism and Radicalisation (GAMER)	4	6
Total		80	71

Post-campaign testing with target audiences

The purpose of this task was to review in detail and test selected campaign assets with target audiences in order to assess the relevance and effectiveness of campaign messages and channels in practice. The post-testing allowed us to assess the effectiveness of CSEP projects empirically in a qualitative or quantitative manner. The selection criteria of the campaigns have been developed further as part of Task 1 to ensure the methodological consistency of the post-campaign testing.

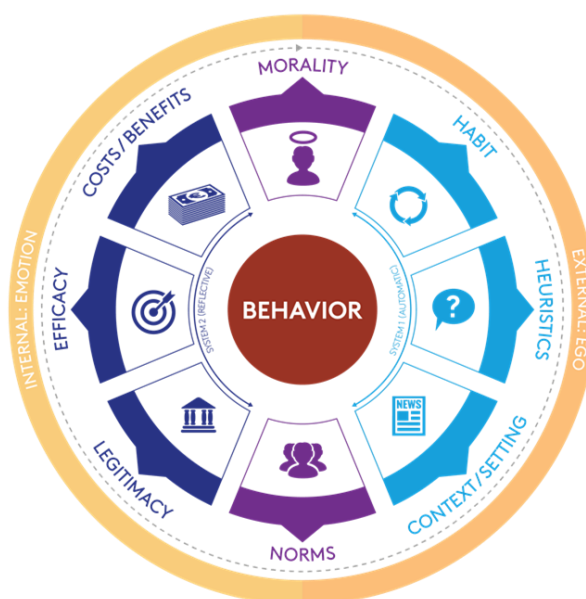
The purpose of this task was to assess the extent to which the activities and in particular the assets of projects analysed have led to the expected results among the target audience. This requires an understanding of possible levers through which communication activities can prevent radicalisation.

The ultimate expected result of the programme and the individual projects was to diminish the risk of radicalisation among project target audiences. It is not possible to measure directly the decline of radicalisation as such that could be attributed to a communication/ engagement project or activity. What however can be evaluated is the extent to which the communication and engagement activities put in place trigger attitudinal, emotional and also behavioural reactions that are likely to diminish the risk of radicalisation.

The evaluation framed this assessment as follows:

- Define the targeted behaviour
 - We anticipated that there will be different behavioural reactions that the projects will have aimed to encourage.
 - Based on the initial review of projects and the scoping interviews, we saw the following as the main recurring types of behaviours targeted by the projects (explicitly or implicitly):
 - a) Not sharing posts/ information that has content that can be associated with radicalisation; or
 - b) Speaking up when witnessing statements that can be considered as harmful to specific groups or associated with radicalisation; or
 - c) Changing media consumption habits to rely on verified sources of information.
 - This list was further enhanced through the review of project documentation. For each project that was covered as part of this task we aimed to clarify what was/were the behavioural objectives the project pursued – be it explicitly or implicitly. When there are no explicit behavioural objectives, this was established through the interviews.
- Identify the behavioural barriers and levers that are associated with a given behaviour.
 - The second point was tailored to each behavioural objective. The study team used the Kantar Public behavioural wheel as a diagnosis tool to map based on literature review and project information the diversity of possible factors that influence the specific behaviour targeted by each selected project.

Figure 31. Kantar Public Behavioural Framework



Source: Kantar Public

The model summarises what we know (from a combination of academic work and practical research experience) are the key generic influences on people's behaviours. The table below shows the definition of the eight axes of the behavioural framework. It is followed by an example of how this can be applied to one of the above behavioural objectives – i.e. speaking up.

For each of the selected projects we will prepare a table mapping the relevant behavioural factors tailored to the given project rationale.

- Assessing in the case of each specific project the extent to which the project activities and communication assets successfully activate the given behavioural levers and drivers.
 - It was not possible in the framework of this campaign testing to evaluate for each project the extent to which it did successfully result in actual behavioural change. That would necessitate an experimental design for each specific project which is beyond the scope of this assignment. However, it was possible to test the extent to which the exposure of target audiences to the communication assets that projects have developed triggers the appropriate behavioural levers.
 - This was assessed, qualitatively or quantitatively depending on the project target audience by:
 - Exposing the respondents from the target audience to the communication assets either in an interview/ focus group (qualitative testing) or in an online survey context (quantitative testing); and
 - Asking follow-up questions tailored to the behavioural levers of a given project so as to assess the extent to which watching a given asset does elicit the desired reactions – rational or emotional.

Design of Post-testing campaigns with target audiences and case study selection

A set of selection criteria was identified to ensure that the projects selected would provide an array of information adequate to assess the effectiveness of the campaigns. In general, the projects selected needed to provide:

- An overview of the theory of change underpinning the campaigns (i.e. the different components of the campaign in terms of whether it addressed and aimed at different objectives/ results)
- Availability of digital communication assets to be tested. At this stage, it is still difficult to fully assess which grants have produced communication assets that could be tested.

Table 8 below provides a matrix of selection criteria.

Table 8. Proposed selection criteria for the selection of 8-10 projects

Selection criteria	Rationale for selection
Completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mix of completed and on-going projects
Geographical spread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mix of geographical coverage between North, South, West, East European Member States
Overall and specific objectives	<p>A mix of projects with well-defined objectives vs broadly defined objectives (e.g. prevent radicalisation)</p> <p>A mix of projects focussed on diverse objectives e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building: empowerment of civil society organisations/capacity building of stakeholders /increase civic engagement • Citizens: awareness raising/trigger behavioural change/enhance critical thinking • Enhance digital resilience and critical thinking • Halt radicalisation and recruitment processes
Target groups	<p>A mix of well-defined target groups vs broadly defined target groups</p> <p>A mix of target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations vs citizens • Diverse groups of citizens
Monitoring and evaluation	<p>A mix of projects with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a well-developed M&E system with a completed evaluation • lack or not well-develop M&E system with no completed evaluation
Type of activities	<p>A mix of online and offline activities</p> <p>A mix of activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of website: an institutional website about the project or website dedicated to a campaign • Creation of online social media account on Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube • Development of a social media content: videos, films, photos, infographics, memes and wordspedia • Creation of video games • Training activities with target audience or civil society organizations and awareness raising sessions • Organisation of conference • In-person social activities: city games and discussions

Type of extremism tackled	A mix of different types of extremism tackled: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevention of the far-right radicalisation Prevention of religious radicalisation: radicalization among young Muslims or counter anti-Semitism.
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Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

To ensure consistency and quality of the data gathered, the final selection created a balanced selection of best practice examples based on the defined criteria above. For instance, the objective was to achieve a wide variety of types of target audiences, types of extremism addressed, types of assets produced, languages used, single country as well as multi-country campaigns, or behavioural triggers addressed among the selected assets.

As mentioned, the methods used to carry out the post-testing were both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative testing of campaigns was done via surveys on 6 assets and qualitative testing via online communities (online focus groups) on with 15 assets. Initially, qualitative testing was proposed via focus groups for the post-campaign testing. At the implementation process of the qualitative testing, the study team has discussed the methodological implications for each of the projects extensively. During these discussions, a number of methodological concerns emerged, related to face-to-face focus groups and vis-à-vis the sensitive topic and the peculiarity of the target groups:

- In this specific case a face-to-face environment is likely to trigger biases, rise questions and lead to peer pressure i.e. when coming into the room, people would inevitably ask themselves why 8-10 young Muslims (and not a more varied group) are participating to the focus group and are asked to discuss their feeling/reactions in relation to videos/images related to radicalisation. Also in some cases the target groups were young Muslims and far-right supporters, which in the same room, would invariably lead to difficult discussions or even other safety concerns.
- In addition, the campaigns are online campaigns i.e. the assets are designed to be viewed and have an impact in an online setting, therefore the best methodological approach would be to re-create a similar setting i.e. online. Capturing the reactions in a face-to-face setting seemed in some ways to dissimilar from the original intention of the projects and likely to generate very different results.

As anticipated, the results from the online communities indeed confirmed that simulation of online behaviour regarding assets was added value for in depth analysis. As part of the steps taken to prepare the post-testing during the interim phase, the selected assets were reviewed and the approach to implementing the post-testing was revised, e.g. sample size, length of asset suited for survey and focus groups. Subsequently, the testing method (survey or focus groups) was allocated to each individual asset, taking into account the feasibility of recruiting the target audience. The following points explain in detail the determined testing methods that are proposed and recorded in the list of selected assets in table 5.

A full overview of the selection of assets for the post-testing of 8 campaigns and the linked testing methods is presented in below.

Table 9. Overview of the post-campaign testing

No.	Project title	No. of assets	Testing methods	No. of Participants	Country	Age range	Length
1	Do one brave thing (D.O.B.T.)	2	Online Communities	24	IT	16-25	20 minutes

2	Oltre l'orizzonte: Contro narrazioni dai margini al centro	3	Online Communities	24	IT	16-25	40 minutes divided in 4 days
3	(Re)think Before Act – Alternative Narratives to Violent Extremism	2	Online Communities	5	PT	16-35	40 minutes divided in 2 days
4	Extremely EUnited: Prevent Radicalization among Youth	3	Survey	1009	NL and FR	16-25	20 minutes
5	COMMunication campaign against exTremism and radicalization (COMMIT)	3	Survey	504	IT	16-25	20 minutes
6	Breaking the ISIS Brand Counter Narrative Project	2	Online Communities	15-17	SE	16-55	40 minutes divided in 2 days
7	Preventing and countering extremism and radicalisation: an action plan for Portugal	3	Survey	4-5	PT	16-35	60 minutes divided in 3 days
8	Prevention of Youth Radicalisation Through Self-Awareness on Cognitive Biases (PRECOBIAS)	3	Online Communities	24	IT	16-25	20 minutes
Total no. of assets selected		21	Focus groups for 15 assets Surveys for 6 assets	Approx. 1610	FR, IT, NL, PT, SE		

Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

In total 50 participants were involved in online communities and 1,500 participants responded to survey.

Table 10 Total N of Participants in each country

	Total N of participants Online Communities	N of repondents in Survey
Italy	24	500
Portugal	10	
Netherlands		500
France		500
Sweden	16	
<i>Total</i>	50	1500

Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

Data analyses were conducted for each communication asset tested. Survey results were analysed via frequency and dispersion analysis when relevant. Responses in online communities were aggregated, and the common pattern was detected in online community results via an in-depth qualitative technique.

Based on this analysis, the reports were developed for each asset, and these reports were used to develop overarching findings. These reports are presented in annex 2, accompanying this final evaluation report.

After compiling the observations made on each communication asset, the study team developed the overarching findings and analysed results across the relevant evaluation questions and the aforementioned behavioural wheel. These findings were synthesised with the desk research and interviews conducted in the study. The results have been used to refine mainly the effectiveness section.

Task 4: Analysis and Synthesis

As part of Task 4, the secondary and primary data collected as part of Task 2 and 3 was triangulated, comparing and contrasting the results of different data sources, in order to analyse the overall achievements of the communication activities of the Programme, the continued relevance of its objectives, the Programme's efficiency as well as the sustainability and added value of the Programme and its actions at the EU level.

This task constitutes the final phase of the study where we first analysed the data gathered, synthesised the information and then developed conclusions and recommendations.

Task 5: Benchmarking and guideline development

This task brings together the data analysis and conclusions from the previous task to develop benchmarks for counter- and alternative-narrative communication campaigns in the P/CVE area for the next CSEP cycle and create user-friendly guides for both CSEP campaigns and policymakers.

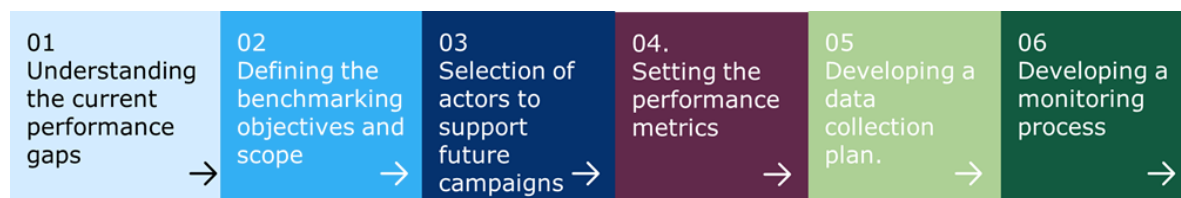
Setting up benchmarks

As the process of benchmarking is used in this study as a systematic tool to measure the performance and process of the communication activities of the CSEP Programme, it allows to operationalise the study findings and answer two main questions:

- What are the main best practices from previous communication activities that can act as good practice examples for future campaigns?
- What can future communication activities do to achieve similar and/or better results?

The benchmarking included six key steps (as shown in the figure below) developed as part of this task.

Figure 32. Steps to developing the benchmarks



These steps of developing the benchmarks conglomerate the study findings and allow us to set clear areas that can be measured and improved across all campaigns.

As the GAMMMA+ model is used to assess the effectiveness of the campaigns, all the six steps of benchmarking will also follow the criterion used in the scorecard under Task 4, including the best practices with respect to the Goals, Audiences, Messages, Messengers, Mediums, Call to action and Monitoring and Evaluation.

In addition to these, three main parameters were included in the benchmarking task: setting the objectives, the recognition and awareness of the campaign, and medium adopted.

The benchmarks were established against different types of indicators:

- Process related indicators where the benchmark is the presence of specific activities (e.g. pre-test the campaign materials with a target audience, developing messages that are tailored at country context, using the communication strategies skill sets);
- Quantitative indicators related to outputs such as a reach, engagement or cost-per-view, and result indicators such as minimum recall numbers or minimum share of respondents who consider campaign assets as distinctive

Development of guidelines

In addition to the setting of the benchmarking, the development of the guidelines also constituted as part of the deliverables of this evaluation. The final report includes two separate guides:

- **Development of a user-friendly guide for CSEP campaigns:** This document aims to provide a valuable and informative guide for future CSEP projects building on the findings from the study. This guide is interlinked with the criteria used during the benchmarking sub-task, focusing on how future campaigns and projects can improve and enhance their Goals, Audiences, Messages, Messengers, Mediums, Call to action and Monitoring and Evaluation.
- **Development of user-friendly guidelines for the European Commission and policymakers in the EU Member States:** this guide aims to be tailored more to policymakers at both the EU and national level, emphasising high-level and operational findings from the study to assist policymakers in the conception of future terms of reference, pointing to conditions future consortia need to fulfil in order to present proposals for effective projects.

Appendix 2. Evaluation matrix

Relevance

Relevance	
1. Did the objectives of individual communication actions correspond to the objectives of the CSEP programme?	
Content of the question	<p>To what extent did the objectives of individual communication actions correspond to the objective of addressing target audiences in the EU susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online/offline?</p> <p>To what extent did the objectives of individual communication actions correspond to the objective to provide the target audience with credible alternatives and positive narratives or expose and challenge terrorist and extremist online/offline propaganda?</p> <p>To what extent did the objectives of individual communication actions correspond to the objective to address the push and pull factors of terrorist and extremist content online/offline?</p> <p>To what extent did the objectives of individual communication actions correspond to the objective to actively contribute to promoting tolerance and EU/democratic fundamental rights and values?</p>
Suggested judgement criteria	The individual communication actions funded through the programme correspond to the objectives of the CSEP programme.
Suggested indicators	<p>Degree to which addressing target audiences in the EU susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online/offline was a stated objective of the campaigns</p> <p>Degree to which providing the target audience with credible alternatives and positive narratives or expose, and challenge terrorist and extremist online/offline propaganda was a stated objective of the campaigns</p> <p>Degree to which addressing the push and pull factors of terrorist and extremist content online/offline was a stated objective of the campaigns</p> <p>Degree to which promoting tolerance and EU/democratic fundamental rights and values was a stated objective of the campaigns</p>
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Campaign testing - Desk research - EU and project level interviews <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative data analysis
Recommendation expected	A need for greater alignment between the needs of individuals prone to radicalisation and the objectives of individual campaigns.
2. How relevant were the individual communication activities to identified target audiences?	
Content of the question	<p>To what extent were the individual communication activities relevant to bringing about behaviour change dissuading target audiences from promoting terrorism and violent extremism and/or using violence?</p> <p>To what degree did the individual communication activities effectively target and reach audiences in the EU susceptible and vulnerable to radicalisation and terrorist content online/offline?</p>
Suggested judgement criteria	The individual communication actions funded through the programme are targeting the appropriate audiences in the EU susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online/offline.

Relevance	
	Correlation between the most common societal groups or individuals which are likely to engage with terrorist content online/offline and the target audiences of the campaigns
Suggested indicators	<p>Evidence of alignment between the <i>actors</i> susceptible to susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online/offline and those targeted by the campaigns</p> <p>Evidence of alignment between the <i>types of communication activities</i> which are most relevant to actors susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online/offline and those used by the campaigns</p> <p>Evidence of alignment between the <i>dissemination channels</i> used by actors susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online/offline and those used by the campaigns</p> <p>Evidence of alignment between the <i>messages</i> which most talk to actors susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online/offline and those used by the campaigns</p>
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Campaign testing - Desk research - EU and project level interviews <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative data analysis
Recommendation expected	The need to align the types of communication approach better with the needs and characteristics of individuals prone to radicalisation.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness	
3. To what extent were the set objectives of the CSEP programme achieved?	
Content of the question	<p>This is the overarching evaluation question for effectiveness which will result from the granular analysis of the CSEP effectiveness at project level combined with the programme rationale and intervention logic.</p> <p>We will synthesise the evidence about the 20 CSEP grants against the intervention logic of the programme and assess the extent to which the outputs, results and impacts expected have been realised.</p>
Suggested judgement criteria	<p>There is a good alignment between CSEP intervention logic and the achievements of individual CSEP grants</p> <p>The grants intervention logic is aligned with the programme logic</p> <p>Evidence is collected against all elements of the programme intervention logic</p>
Suggested indicators	<p>Alignment between programme objectives and grants':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intervention logics at granular level; and - Actions put in place; and - Results and impacts identified
Suggested methodological tools	The response to this question will result from triangulation of data across all evaluation questions under effectiveness described below.
Recommendation expected	Areas where the programme was particularly successful and those where it lagged behind will be identified and success factors for the next generation of grants will be formulated.

Effectiveness	
4. Did the projects clearly outline objectives in line with the expectations of the Commission? Was the project clear on defining success at the outset of the project inception? Were the objectives of the campaigns achieved at project completion?	
Content of the question	<p>This question is about the extent to which the process of designing successful communication campaigns was observed by the grantees.</p> <p>The first step of this process as presented in the methodology section is clarity over objectives.</p> <p>We will therefore examine the extent to which the projects had in place clear definitions of objectives and project level intervention logics.</p> <p>We will also review the extent to which the projects ensured that measurement against these objectives was put in place and whether they collected evidence of success against objectives.</p>
Suggested judgement criteria	<p>CSEP projects had clear objectives and intervention logics at the start of the grants.</p> <p>Achievements against these objectives were monitored and reported.</p>
Suggested indicators	<p>Existence of projects' intervention logic</p> <p>The extent to which CSEP grants objectives are logical and achievable (and SMART)</p> <p>Existence of monitoring and evaluation processes and reporting</p> <p>Coverage of M&E activities against objectives</p>
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - In-depth interviews <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project scorecards
Recommendation expected	<p>The recommendations stemming from this evaluation question will focus on design of successful grants and the extent to which the new programme could foster effectiveness in terms of processes to design successful communications actions.</p>
5. What factors influenced the achievements observed? What are the factors that contribute to a campaign meeting its objectives?	
Content of the question	<p>To analyse this question we will focus on the factors presented in the methodology section notably the extent to which the projects covered all of these communication design stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goal - Audience - Message - Messenger - Medium - Call to action - Evaluation <p>The extent to which these pillars were present in the grants will be assessed. We will also examine whether and how the presence or absence of these pillars affected the success of the projects funded.</p>
Suggested judgement criteria	<p>CSEP grants covered all elements of the process of defining effective communication campaigns</p>
Suggested indicators	<p>Mapping of CSEP grants against each of the above pillars</p>

Effectiveness	
Suggested methodological tools	Data collection tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - In-depth interviews Analysis tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project scorecards
Recommendation expected	The answers to this evaluation questions will identify the strengths and weaknesses of CSEP grants with regard to the above pillars and the extent to which these fostered or hindered successful implementation and achievement of results.
6. Which campaign activities contributed most to achieving campaign objectives? What worked well and what not?	
Content of the question	CSEP grants had to combine online and offline activities. The online activities could use different approaches combining owned, earned and paid media. In particular we will look into the extent to which the funded campaigns made effective use of paid media to reach the niche target audiences which they were set out to influence. Different types of online and offline activities were covered by the grantees and the different activities will be mapped. Through the campaign post-testing we will evaluate the extent to which the different types were effective in reaching the programme objectives and addressing target group's needs The judgements will be made first against the intervention logic at the grant level and secondly at the programme level
Suggested judgement criteria	CSEP grants focused on those activities that were aligned with campaigns objectives and effective in delivering results
Suggested indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mapping of types of activities - Outputs and results achieved at activity and grant level
Suggested methodological tools	Data collection tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - In-depth interviews - Post-testing Analysis tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project scorecards
Recommendation expected	Based on the analysis we will provide recommendations about the most effective mix of activities. In particular we will look into how the online and offline components should be combined and complemented.
7. To what extent did the civil society engagement contribute to achieving campaign objectives? Did campaign use civil society engagement to its fullest potential?	
Content of the question	CSEP was built around strong engagement of CSOs the role of which was meant to be notably around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding the target audiences; - Reach to these target audiences - Credibility among target audiences. To answer this evaluation question we will examine whether CSOs played this role as part of the grants implemented.
Suggested judgement criteria	CSOs were effective in bringing to the grants the understanding and access to target groups

Effectiveness	
	CSOs which were involved were also credible messengers for communication actions
Suggested indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mapping of activities played by CSOs - Mapping of the type of CSOs engaged - Evidence about the role and added value of CSOs engagement
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - In-depth interviews - Post-testing <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project scorecards
Recommendation expected	We will identify the successful models in engaging with CSOs as part of the next generation of grants
8. Is there a consistent and effective approach of conducting campaigns stemming from the analysed projects?	
Content of the question	<p>This evaluation question builds on the previous one which will look at the extent to which the different pillars of effective communication action design were present in the CSEP funded projects.</p> <p>Through that previous question we will identify presence or absence of the different stages of communications design and implementation.</p> <p>When answering this evaluation question we will also look at the extent to which those projects that covered most of the communications design process were also more or less effective in achieving their objectives.</p> <p>This evaluation question is also about the extent to which the projects effectively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reached their target groups and which types of communications actions were most suitable in doing so - Resulted in the desired changes in attitudes and perceptions which are preconditions for behavioural change <p>Therefore, this evaluation question will not focus only on the process that the grants put in place to maximise effectiveness but also the content in terms of using best practices in preventing radicalisation and extremism. This will cover the issues presented in method section such as: gender sensitivity, addressing the risk of message dominance, etc.</p>
Suggested judgement criteria	Projects that put in place all elements of effective communications action design have reached their desired objectives
Suggested indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mapping of project design against the 7 stages (see above) - Project level outputs, results and impacts
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - In-depth interviews - Post-testing <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scorecards
Recommendation expected	The recommendations stemming from this evaluation question will focus on identifying the key success factors resulting in effectively preventing radicalisation

Effectiveness	
9. What are the lessons learned and best approaches stemming from the projects analysed under this assignment?	
Content of the question	<p>This evaluation question will identify and summarise the lessons learnt by considering the answers to all other evaluation questions. It will look at both facets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project design process; and - The content and the types of results and effects achieved
Suggested judgement criteria	<p>The projects had developed and followed a robust project strategy (following GAMMMA+ model).</p> <p>The projects clearly defined results and effects to be achieved and relevant indicators of success</p>
Suggested indicators	Lessons learnt at project level and lessons learnt at grant level
Suggested methodological tools	Synthesis and triangulation of findings
Recommendation expected	By answering this evaluation question, we will identify for each of the stages of communication action design one key recommendation. The recommendations will focus on how the programme could further foster good practices regarding objective setting, audience analysis, etc.
10. Where relevant, what are the common findings and potential lessons learned from the monitoring and evaluation components of the projects analysed?	
Content of the question	<p>In addition to synthesising the findings of our own research we will undertake a meta-analysis of the project evaluations.</p> <p>We will review the type and depth of data collected by these project level monitoring and evaluations and analyse the extent to which these succeeded in going beyond basic reach and engagement metrics. We will also analyse how the insights arising from these activities was used to improve the communication actions.</p> <p>Lessons learnt will therefore look at both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The use of monitoring and evaluation as part of these grants; and - The actual recommendations coming up from the research undertaken as part of these projects
Suggested judgement criteria	<p>M&E was effectively used in all CSEP grants to inform decisions about the campaign implementation</p> <p>Lessons learnt from M&E activities were used by the grants for decision making</p>
Suggested indicators	<p>Presence of M&E activities</p> <p>Their scale, scope and depth</p> <p>Use of M&E activities</p>
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - In-depth interviews <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project scorecards
Recommendation expected	<p>We will formulate recommendations about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How effective M&E activities under CSEP grants should be designed - How the data should be used and at what stages

Effectiveness	
Messages	
11. To what extent did the campaigns use tailor-made messages across the intended target group(s)?	
Content of the question	<p>Relevance of the message for the target audience is a key factor of effectiveness. Unless the message is perceived as addressing issues that the target audiences care about it is unlikely to be resulting in the desired engagement.</p> <p>Therefore, the sub-questions related to this evaluation question are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent did the projects ensure through a systematic process of research/ possibly testing that their messages were tailored to their target audiences. <p>This concerns on one hand tailoring of messages to the specific group(s) but also across countries (in case the projects were transnational)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent were the projects messages received as relevant by the target audiences
Suggested judgement criteria	<p>The projects funded have systematically designed messages that were based on an understanding of the target audiences needs.</p> <p>The majority of projects tested the messages before roll out</p> <p>In multi-country projects the messages were tailored across countries</p> <p>The testing shows that the target audiences see the project messages as relevant</p>
Suggested indicators	<p>The processes and methods that projects have put in place to ensure tailoring of messages</p> <p>The perceived relevance of the communication assets and messages by selected respondents from among target groups</p>
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research – detailed review of project documentation - Interviews with projects - Asset testing with target audiences – observation and qualitative feedback <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project scorecards
Recommendation expected	<p>The recommendations will concern on one hand the process and on the other hand the key characteristics of messaging that is perceived as relevant by the target audiences</p> <p>They will aim to identify how can future projects ensure message relevance to their target groups.</p>
12. Which specific messages have been utilized across the variety of target group(s) analysed?	
Content of the question	<p>We understand that this question looks at the type of messaging that was at the core of the projects funded.</p> <p>To categorise project messages we will use existing typologies such as: counter-stereotyping, alternative accounts of events, emotionally evocative arguments, etc.</p> <p>We will therefore categorise the project activities and assets into categories of different types of messaging in prevention violent extremism. We will subsequently synthesise existing studies about the effectiveness of different types of these communication approaches.</p>
Suggested judgement criteria	<p>Most projects use theoretical frameworks and types of messaging that are supported through empirical research as being effective.</p>

Effectiveness	
Suggested indicators	Types of messages deployed in each project according to categories arising from literature.
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literature review to identify typology of theoretical frameworks and to map their effectiveness; - Review of projects' assets against this typology <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project scorecards
Recommendation expected	Recommendations about the types of narratives that appear to be more effective
13. What kind of messages are found to most powerfully influence behaviour among the target group(s)?	
Content of the question	This question is closely associated with the previous one. In the previous question we will examine the theoretical message effectiveness by looking at the extent to which existing empirical research supports the used type of messaging. As part of this evaluation question we will qualitatively assess the extent to which the selected assets are associated with the desired lead indicators that are considered as pre-conditions for the sought after behavioural change
Suggested judgement criteria	The majority of assets tested are associated with at least some lead indicators that are expected to be pre-conditions for the desired behavioural change
Suggested indicators	Target audience reactions on assets tested
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asset testing through case studies using qualitative focus groups <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asset rating cards
Recommendation expected	The recommendations will be associated with those from the previous question about the types of messages and messaging that appear most effective and with which audiences.
14. Were the messages and communications products tested with the target groups before dissemination and during the campaign?	
Content of the question	<p>This question is rather about the process used by the funded projects and it looks at the extent to which the projects pre-tested communication messages and assets with target audiences.</p> <p>Pre-testing is a key step in designing effective communications assets and messages as it ensures relevance but also effectiveness of the creative execution and the messaging.</p>
Suggested judgement criteria	The projects pre-tested at least a selection of communication assets and approaches
Suggested indicators	<p>The type of pre-testing used</p> <p>The scale of pre-testing (what method, what share of assets)</p> <p>The focus of the pre-testing (what was being tested: message, creative execution, communication channels, etc.)</p> <p>Evidence about take up of pre-testing results to revise the communications approach</p>
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research – review of project documentation

Effectiveness	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews with projects <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project scorecards
Recommendation expected	The recommendations arising from this evaluation question will focus on the use of pre-testing to develop effective materials and strategies
15. Were the messages and communications products monitored for performance throughout the campaigns? What are the quantitative and qualitative indicators that could help assess the impact campaigns had on the intended target group(s)?	
Content of the question	<p>This evaluation question is also about the process and it will look at the extent to which the projects put in place performance monitoring measures.</p> <p>It will look at the extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The projects started with a clear set of key performance indicators against which progress would be tracked; - The indicators were being monitored on ongoing basis and whether data was used to optimise the communication actions; and - Whether the indicators went beyond the usual reach and engagement metrics and covered also attitudinal, emotional or even behavioural indicators
Suggested judgement criteria	<p>All projects had in place a monitoring framework</p> <p>The indicators used covered the full chain of the theory of change from outputs to results and impacts</p>
Suggested indicators	<p>Existence of key performance indicators (KPIs)</p> <p>Monitoring of KPIs</p> <p>The types of KPIs used</p> <p>Evidence of the use of KPIs to optimise the campaign</p>
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research about project reporting - Project interviews <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project scorecard
Recommendation expected	The recommendations will focus on the types of indicators that have proven to be useful as well as their use
Communication channels	
16. What communication/ dissemination tools/ channels were used in order to achieve the set objectives?	
Content of the question	<p>Through this question we will unpack the types of communications activities and channels that were used by the projects. The types of activities can cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online or offline outreach - Paid advertising - Removing harmful content - Events - Distribution of print materials (flyers or equivalent) <p>The extent to which there is a logical link between the grant objectives sought and the channels used</p>

Effectiveness	
Suggested judgement criteria	Projects used communication channels that were appropriate for the types of objectives sought after
Suggested indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Typology of communication approaches - Typology of indicators used
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research about project reporting - Project interviews <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project scorecard
Recommendation expected	n/a the recommendations related to this question will stem from the combination of answering this question and the following one
17. Which communication/ dissemination tools/ channels worked best to reach the intended target group(s)?	
Content of the question	Building on the mapping that will be established through the previous question we will combine data about project's reach, based on their own monitoring data, and data about their effectiveness as well as relevance of the choice of channels (based on post-testing) to identify which channels worked best for which target audiences.
Suggested judgement criteria	Projects put in place the optimal combination of channels to reach the different target audience.
Suggested indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Types of communication channels used (based on previous evaluation question) - Relevance of these communication channels for the target audience (based on post-testing) - Effectiveness of communication channels based on reach and engagement figures from campaigns reports
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research – extractions of reach data from projects reports; - Perceived relevance of channels used based on qualitative and quantitative post-testing <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project scorecards
Recommendation expected	The recommendations will build on the assessment of the match between communication channels and types of activities and different target audiences
18. Which were the most effective channels of communication according to the identified target group(s)? What are the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of the channels to reach the specific target groups? What is the link between effectiveness of a platform and change in behaviour?	
Content of the question	<p>There is a difference between effectiveness in terms of reach and effectiveness in terms of medium or long term change. A campaign with a large reach (which reached high number of persons) is not necessarily an effective campaign if the quality of the reach is not in line with the target audiences.</p> <p>A campaign may reach a high number of persons but these are not necessarily the right target audiences. Furthermore, considering the campaign objectives depending on the platform on which the target audiences are reached they may not necessarily be effective.</p> <p>Therefore to answer this question we will look at the considerations about:</p>

Effectiveness	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The extent to which there is evidence that the persons reached are persons that fall into the target audience; and - The interaction between the communication channels and the effectiveness in terms of changes in lead indicators.
Suggested judgement criteria	<p>The communication channels deployed by the campaigns are those that maximise the effectiveness of messages and lead to the desired call to action.</p> <p>The target groups reached are in line with the project theory of change</p>
Suggested indicators	<p>Match between target groups and persons reached</p> <p>Match between message, target group and context</p> <p>Match between message, channels and the extent to which these result in lead indicators that are expected to be associated with behaviour change</p>
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - Ex-post testing <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mapping lead indicators to behaviour change wheel - Project scorecards
Recommendation expected	<p>The recommendations will focus on the extent to which certain communication channels and types of activities are more likely to be relevant to certain target groups and be associated with behavioural change</p>
19. What are the most trusted and effective methods of communication according to the intended target group(s)? Were these proven in the project's delivery and evaluation?	
Content of the question	<p>This evaluation question in our understanding covers two angles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On one hand, the extent to which those communication methods and channels that are discussed in the literature about C/PVE as effective means were the ones used and deployed by the CSEP grants; and - On the other hand, the extent to which there was a match between the communication channels used and the actual channels consumption by the target group and the engagement of the target group with the campaigns <p>In particular we will look at the extent to which the CSEP grants have successfully used those online media where recruitment is likely to happen more frequently based on literature such as gaming platforms for example or whether they stayed on the more mainstream social media which allowed a wider reach but the extent to which this reach was sufficiently targeted to vulnerable populations will be explored</p>
Suggested judgement criteria	<p>The CSEP grants used those communication channels that are known from the literature as effective in reaching to vulnerable target groups</p> <p>The channels used by CSEP grants have been shown to engage with the target groups</p> <p>CSEP grants evaluation data shows the target audiences were reached and engaged with the channels</p>
Suggested indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Types of channels used by type of channels shown as effective from literature - Reach and engagement figures from CSEP project reports - Target groups views on the channels used based on qualitative or quantitative post-testing - Level of engagement with the campaigns based on social media analysis

Effectiveness	
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research in combination with literature review - Project scorecards - Post-testing <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media analysis
Recommendation expected	Similarly to previous questions this question will result in recommendations about the most suitable communications channel mix for the target groups
20. What are the specific information gaps identified according to each major target group(s) of the campaigns?	
Content of the question	<p>This evaluation question covers on one hand the project assumptions about what information gaps each grant was trying to address and on the other hand the perceived information gaps of the target audiences.</p> <p>We will explore each project's intervention logic in which we will examine the rationale for the communication actions and the extent to which the campaigns were responding to an identified and need and if so which one.</p> <p>On the other hand during the post-testing we will analyse the perceptions of information needs of the target audiences while at the same time acknowledging the gap between what is perceived and verbalised as a gap and what may be implicit gaps that the target groups are maybe unaware of</p>
Suggested judgement criteria	<p>CSEP projects had a clear understanding of information needs they would target</p> <p>Target groups confirmed the projects assumptions about information needs during the post-testing</p>
Suggested indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existence of intervention logics - The logical linkages between information needs in the intervention logic and the types of actions funded - Perceptions of the target groups of information needs
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - Post-testing <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reconstruction of intervention logic for each grant
Recommendation expected	Complementing the previous evaluation questions, the answers to this question will provide recommendations about the nature of information needs of the different target audiences and whether and how these could be better catered for by the grants under CSEP
Organisation of grants under CSEP	
21. Which (type of) organisations have proved most successful in reaching and impacting target groups?	
Content of the question	<p>The CSEP grants were led and implemented by different types of organisations bringing together academic players and civil society organisations of different types. The extent to which the organisations succeeded in preventing radicalisation and violent behaviours also depends on the extent to which they were recognised as credible "messenger" or whether they cooperated with other credible "messengers".</p> <p>The extent to which the messenger is seen as a credible and authoritative source of information by the target group will affect the effectiveness of the actions.</p>

Effectiveness	
	Another dimension of this question is about the extent to which the organisations had the necessary communications and creative expertise to produce effective campaigns. The initial review of the grants shows a strong reliance on organisations with deep target group expertise. However, a more detailed review will need to establish to what extent the organisations mobilised also expertise in the area of communications (copywriting, creative production as well as media channels strategies)
Suggested judgement criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The organisations implementing the projects were seen as credible messengers by the target audiences - The organisations in charge of the grants combined both target group expertise as well as communication expertise and know how
Suggested indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceptions of communications assets and their messengers by the target groups - Mapping of capabilities deployed in each grant
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post-testing of campaigns and assets - In-depth interviews with the grants <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project scorecards
Recommendation expected	<p>Recommendations stemming from this question will focus on both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to maximise the credibility of CSEP projects as messengers in this space; and - What capabilities and skills sets of grantees results in most effective results
22. What roles did different organisations within a consortium play and were they complementing of one another?	
Content of the question	<p>Through this question we will analyse how the consortia were built and what were the roles and responsibilities of the different parties in each consortium.</p> <p>The roles and responsibilities will be analysed also in light of the intervention logic of each grant</p>
Suggested judgement criteria	<p>The consortia mobilised partners who all had clear roles</p> <p>There were synergies between all partners involved</p>
Suggested indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roles and responsibilities of each organisation - Mapping of their roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis intervention logic - Perceived synergies among the organisations engaged
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - In-depth interviews with the project organisations <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reconstruction of intervention logic and mapping of organisations roles against it
Recommendation expected	By answering this evaluation question we will develop recommendations about the skills sets and capabilities to be covered in the next generation of CSEP grants
23. Were all consortia effective or were there partners missing in the consortia?	

Effectiveness	
Content of the question	<p>This question will look at the extent to which all the skillsets and capabilities necessary to implement effective communication campaigns were present in the consortia. This covers the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding the target group; - Capacity to reach out the target group either through existing networks (offline and online) or by deploying effective media strategies - Capacity to plan a communication strategy - Communications strategy capabilities - Copywriting expertise - Creative execution - Media strategy execution - Outreach through offline activities - Measurement and evaluation
Suggested judgement criteria	CSEP projects combined the skills sets needed to successfully execute a communications campaign
Suggested indicators	Mapping of grants capabilities against the list of skills and capacities needed
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research and in-depth interviews <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project scorecards
Recommendation expected	Recommendations stemming from this question will complement previous question and identify areas in which the CSEP grants had gaps when it comes to effective campaign design and execution.
24. What would be the model consortium for an effective CSEP project? What is the most effective consortium build for a CSEP project?	
Content of the question	<p>This evaluation question will build on the mapping carried out as part of the previous question.</p> <p>By mapping all projects consortia against the canvas of capabilities needed for a communication campaign we will identify which grants and which consortia were more successful than others in covering the full range of skills and competences.</p> <p>This will allow us to identify the consortia that were most successful in this regard and which could provide lessons learnt for the next generation of grants. We will also triangulate the information about their capabilities with the evidence about their effectiveness in terms of reach and results.</p>
Suggested judgement criteria	Good practices existing the portfolio of CSEP projects when it comes to effective coverage of communication campaigning capabilities
Suggested indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mapping of grants against the canvas of communications campaigning capabilities
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - In-depth interviews with the grants <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project scorecards
Recommendation expected	By identifying the successful consortia we will provide recommendations on how these considerations could be covered in the next generation of the programme

Effectiveness	
25. What were the successes or weaknesses of the cross-border consortia? How successful were project interventions when reused across borders?	
Content of the question	<p>CSEP grants were either single country or cross-border.</p> <p>The rationale for a cross-border component was to allow partners from different countries to learn from each other. Countries' capabilities in terms of communications actions to counter radicalisation are in very different stages of development.</p> <p>Through the cross-border cooperation CSEP was also aiming to build capacity in those countries where it was underdeveloped.</p> <p>To answer this question we will on one hand explore the participation of organisations from different countries in the programme and identify the extent to which both types of countries (stronger and weaker capacity) were present.</p> <p>We will look for evidence of cross-border learning and capacity building through the CSEP projects.</p> <p>Another dimension to look at under this question is the extent to which the grants were able to actually deploy successfully common communications campaigns cross-border. Given the specificities of the target groups but on the other hand also the cross-border nature of recruitment and radicalisation we will examine whether cross-border projects are able to reach success in multiple countries.</p>
Suggested judgement criteria	<p>Cross-border projects successfully engaged grantees from countries which have different degrees of capacity and capabilities in terms of C/PVE</p> <p>There is evidence of capacity building through CSEP grants and the fact that partners were able to reuse learnings from CSEP grants</p>
Suggested indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mapping of participating countries vis-à-vis context - Examples of capacity building - Mapping of communication activities across multiple countries
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - In-depth interviews with the grants <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contextual analysis - Organisational map for each grant
Recommendation expected	<p>Recommendations stemming from this question will focus on the extent to which the next generation of CSEP should be funding single country or cross-border projects. If the latter we will identify success factors for effective cross-border exchange and engagement.</p>
26. How successful were consortia at tailoring to context?	
Content of the question	<p>This evaluation question builds on the previous one as it looks at the extent to which the CSEP consortia were effective in adapting their messages, choice of messenger but also creative execution and communications channel use to the specific contexts in their countries.</p> <p>CSEP projects covered different country contexts and subsequently also different forms of extremism.</p> <p>In each country context the messaging needed to be tailored.</p> <p>Similarly a messenger that is credible in one country isn't necessarily credible in another.</p> <p>Through this evaluation question we will review the actions projects have put in place to tailor to different country contexts and will review the extent to which they succeeded doing so.</p>

Effectiveness	
Suggested judgement criteria	CSEP grants have put in place actions to tailor to different country contexts There is evidence that the tailoring was successful
Suggested indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mapping of actions put in place through which communication actions and strategies were tailored - Mapping of communication assets to analyse whether and how they were tailored across countries
Suggested methodological tools	Data collection tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research Analysis tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project scorecards
Recommendation expected	Based on this analysis we will formulate recommendations about the means used to tailor communications messages and assets as well as channels to each country context.

Efficiency

Efficiency	
27. Were the effects/benefits achieved at a reasonable cost?	
Content of the question	To what extent were the effects of the campaign(s) achieved at a reasonable cost? To what extent were the benefits of the campaign(s) achieved at a reasonable cost?
Suggested judgement criteria	The individual communication campaigns funded through the programme are operating at a reasonable cost compared to the <i>effects</i> achieved through targeting the appropriate audiences in the EU susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online. The individual communication campaigns funded through the programme are operating at a reasonable cost compared to the <i>benefits</i> achieved through targeting the appropriate audiences in the EU susceptible and vulnerable to radicalising and terrorist content online.
Suggested indicators	Ratio between the benefits and the direct costs from developing and disseminating the campaigns Understanding the extent to which the costs are proportionate to the benefits
Suggested methodological tools	Data collection tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - EU and project level interviews Analysis tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative data analysis - Data triangulation
Recommendation expected	The need to better understand or measure the effects/ benefits against the costs incurred.
28. Were the EU support provided via direct management/grants (calls for proposals but with the possibility to have a Consortium composed with entities from one single Member State) the most efficient means of EU support?	
Content of the question	To what extent were the operational modalities of EU support through the form of calls for proposals for direct management/ grants the most efficient means of support?

Efficiency	
	To what extent was the possibility to have a Consortium composed of entities from one single Member State a beneficial or hindering factor in the type of EU support that could be provided.
Suggested judgement criteria	The EU support provided was efficient compared to other forms of EU support identified by stakeholders
Suggested indicators	Evidence of efficiency factors which are achieved through the current form of EU support through direct management/grants
Suggested methodological tools	Data collection tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - EU and project level interviews Analysis tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative data analysis - Data triangulation
Recommendation expected	The current form of EU support should be continued in the future
29. To what extent are the costs proportionate to the benefits?	
Content of the question	What direct costs ⁸⁵ (application costs, compliance costs, hassle costs) have been borne by the campaign organisers? What direct benefits have been borne by the campaign organisers?
Suggested judgement criteria	Identification of stakeholder groups which have been negatively affected by direct costs Qualitative comparison of costs and benefits
Suggested indicators	Average costs (either monetary or FTE) incurred by campaign organisers to complete an application to the programme. Evidence of direct benefits being proportionate to the costs incurred.
Suggested methodological tools	Data collection tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - EU and project level interviews Analysis tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative data analysis - Data triangulation
Recommendation expected	The need for the administrative costs in applying to the programme to be reduced or mitigated with simpler procedures.
30. Which factors influenced the efficiency of the observed results?	
Content of the question	What are the positive/ negative internal factors ⁸⁶ which influenced the efficiency of the observed results?

⁸⁵ The BRG, Tool #58 defines this as “including direct compliance costs and hassle/irritation burdens” – “Administrative burdens are those costs borne by businesses, citizens, civil society organizations and public authorities as a result of administrative activities performed to comply with information obligations included in legal rules. – Hassle costs are often associated with businesses, but they apply equally well to consumers: they include costs associated with waiting time and delays, redundant legal provisions, corruption etc.”

⁸⁶ In this context, internal factors pertain to the factors which originate from within an organisation that is developing and launching a campaign

Efficiency	
	What are the positive/ negative external factors ⁸⁷ which influenced the efficiency of the observed results?
Suggested judgement criteria	The factors influencing the observed results outweigh the factors hindering them.
Suggested indicators	Evidence of observed results vis a vis the influencing and hindering factors which impact their efficiency.
Suggested methodological tools	Data collection tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - EU and project level interviews Analysis tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative data analysis
Recommendation expected	The need for external factors to be taken better into account in the future.
31. How may efficiency be improved for similar future campaigns?	
Content of the question	Could the same degree of effects have been achieved with simpler campaign approaches? Are there any obstacles which have hindered the reach and exposure of campaign material?
Suggested judgement criteria	The current approaches adopted by campaigns operate efficiently and are sufficiently reaching their targeted audiences
Suggested indicators	Evidence of factors or areas which could be improved in campaigns to improve overall efficiency. Evidence of obstacles which have hindered the efficiency of the campaigns
Suggested methodological tools	Data collection tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - EU and project level interviews Analysis tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative data analysis
Recommendation expected	Simpler campaign approaches may bring about greater efficiency gains
32. Which were the most efficient channels of communication according to the identified target group(s)?	
Content of the question	What were the factors of the different campaign channels which enabled identified target group(s) to best interact with campaign material?
Suggested judgement criteria	Identification of the most efficient channels of communication based on the level of reach and exposure to campaign material
Suggested indicators	Level of exposure and reach across the different communication platforms Level of absorption of material and content by target groups

⁸⁷ In this context, external factors pertain to the factors which originate out-with an organisation that is developing and launching a campaign. These can consist of 1. Political factors: EU/International legislative changes to addressing the availability and proliferation of radicalising and terrorist content online, 2. Economic factors: changing national financial resources to fight terrorist content online, 3. Social factors: Increase in public awareness and action in promoting alternative and credible alternatives to terrorist and extreme online propaganda

Efficiency	
	Evidence of observed results vis a vis the influencing and hindering factors of different communication channels
Suggested methodological tools	Data collection tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Campaign testing Analysis tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative data analysis
Recommendation expected	A combination of communication channels allows for a broader reach and exposure

Coherence

Coherence	
33. Did the various communication activities chosen in the individual projects (paid media campaigns, events, stakeholders' engagement) work well together?	
Content of the question	To what extent are there complementarities, synergies or overlaps between the different types of communication activities?
Suggested judgement criteria	Views from across different stakeholders point to the different types of activities being complementary to one another.
Suggested indicators	Evidence on the degree to which complementarities exist and/or synergies have been actively sought across the communication activities Evidence on the degree to which inconsistencies (i.e. overlaps, contradictions, gaps) exist across the communication activities.
Suggested methodological tools	Data collection tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - EU and project level interviews Analysis tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative data analysis
Recommendation expected	Greater cooperation and interlinkages would bring about greater internal coherence in across the communication activities
34. How did coherence and synergies with other projects in the same target region or country unfold?	
Content of the question	To what extent did the synergies with other projects maximise the outcome of the projects analysed? What were the main working modalities which aided projects to cooperate, collaborate or work together?
Suggested judgement criteria	Views from across different stakeholders point to coherence and synergies between other projects in the same target region or country
Suggested indicators	Evidence on the degree to which there are complementarities, contradictions or overlaps between other projects in the same target region or country

Coherence	
	Evidence on the degree to which inconsistencies (i.e. gaps/contradictions and/or duplications) exist between other projects in the same target region or country
Suggested methodological tools	Data collection tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - EU and project level interviews Analysis tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative data analysis
Recommendation expected	Greater synergies and interconnections between projects in the same region could increase the exposure and reach of campaign material to target audiences

EU Added Value

EU Added Value	
35. What is the added value resulting from individual projects' communication activities implemented at the EU level?	
Content of the question	Is there evidence of EU added value resulting from the communication activities at the national or regional levels?
Suggested judgement criteria	Stakeholders agree that there is added value of the communication activities
Suggested indicators	Degree to which there is evidence of volume, scope, role and/or process effects as a result of the communication activities Stakeholders' views on the degree to which that there is added value, i.e. volume, scope, role and/or process effects, resulting from EU intervention and trends in these views across EU Member States
Suggested methodological tools	Data collection tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - EU and project level interviews Analysis tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative data analysis
Recommendation expected	The communication activities should encourage a greater EU coverage in terms of reach.
36. Could the individual projects' communication actions be more successful if implemented uniquely at the national level?	
Content of the question	To what extent could the same results be achieved at national and regional levels without EU intervention?
Suggested judgement criteria	Stakeholders disagree that the same results could have been achieved at another level
Suggested indicators	Degree to which there is evidence that the same results could have been achieved at international, national or regional level without EU intervention, based on secondary sources

EU Added Value	
	Stakeholders' views on the degree to which there is evidence that the same results be achieved at international, national or regional level without EU intervention
Suggested methodological tools	Data collection tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research - EU and project level interviews Analysis tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative data analysis
Recommendation expected	To maintain the pertinence of the campaign materials, an international approach should be further encouraged.
37. Which members of the consortia attended the CSEP training workshops organised within the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (funded by the EC)?	
Content of the question	Which of the CSEP training workshops proved most useful in helping projects? To what degree were the CSEP training workshops for projects helpful? Were the persons and organisations present in the training workshops the persons who would be able to apply the workshop results in practice? To what extent was the training done at the right moment, meaning at a point when the grantees were able to integrate lessons learning from the training to their approach What additional specific support would have been useful/needed?
Suggested judgement criteria	The training workshops received positive feedback There is evidence the projects used the learning from the workshops in practice The appropriate organisations took part in the workshops The workshops were timely
Suggested indicators	Participation in the workshops Participant satisfaction Examples of synergies
Suggested methodological tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk research – list of participants - EU level interviews – RAN - Project level fieldwork – interviews with projects
Recommendation expected	Recommendations will be formulated about future use of training in case the approach is continued

Sustainability

Sustainability	
38. Are the effects of the individual CSEP projects likely to last after the communication actions end?	
Content of the question	To what extent are the long-term effects of the interventions sustainable? To what extent have the interventions triggered additional initiatives at national level?
Suggested judgement criteria	Identification of possible positive effects of the communication actions if it were to end

Sustainability	
Suggested indicators	<p>Degree to which stakeholders agree/disagree that that results achieved so far would not last if funding for actions covered by the communication actions would not be available in the future</p> <p>Evidence from target audiences that the effects of the communication actions bring about long lasting impacts</p> <p>Examples of other interventions which have been triggered at the national level through the communication actions</p>
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Campaign testing - Desk research - EU and project level interviews <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative data analysis
Recommendation expected	The effects of the CSEP projects could better adapted to encourage longer lasting effects.
39. What could be done for a more long lasting impact?	
Content of the question	<p>Q42.1. What are the main factors which drive long lasting impacts?</p> <p>Q42.2. What hinderances limit the long-lasting impact of the communication activities?</p>
Suggested judgement criteria	Several hindering factors limit the long-lasting impacts of the communication activities
Suggested indicators	<p>Evidence of key hindrances which limit or restrict the communication activities from having a long-lasting impact.</p> <p>Evidence of long-lasting impacts and "best practice" examples of where communication activities have brought about impacts which last over time</p>
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Campaign testing - Desk research - EU and project level interviews <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative data analysis
Recommendation expected	Consider risks and mitigation measures at the beginning.
40. To what extent did the projects ensure the sustainability of actions they carried out?	
Content of the question	What provisions were put in place in the design of the communication activities to ensure the sustainability of impacts?
Suggested judgement criteria	Actions which put in place sustainability provisions in the communication activities enable more long-term sustainability actions.
Suggested indicators	<p>Evidence of provisions which were put in place in the design and implementation of the communication campaigns that ensured the sustainability of the projects.</p> <p>Evidence of long-lasting impacts where communication activities have put in place provisions to ensure the sustainability of the actions carried out.</p>

Sustainability	
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Campaign testing - Desk research - Project level interviews <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative data analysis
Recommendation expected	A greater number of projects should incorporate provisions to enable more long-term impacts
41. What were the most successful approaches to sustainability that can be adopted by future projects?	
Content of the question	What were the main success factors which enabled the communication activities to produce long-term impacts?
Suggested judgement criteria	Projects successfully implemented before and during the campaign duration an effect approach to ensure sustainability.
Suggested indicators	<p>Evidence of successful approaches from individual projects which brought about long-lasting effects?</p> <p>Evidence of prior planning from projects that took into account the sustainability of the effects of the campaigns.</p>
Suggested methodological tools	<p>Data collection tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU level interviews/ project level interviews - Desk research <p>Analysis tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative data analysis
Recommendation expected	Future projects should look to incorporate the sustainability of the intended impacts during the design phase of each campaign.

Appendix 3. Concept Note

The purpose of this concept note is to provide scientific knowledge and contextual information for the assessment of relevance of the CSEP programme and the projects that have been implemented within its framework. To convey a nuanced understanding of the process of radicalisation, its root causes and enablers on and off-line, as well as knowledge on main traits in prevention strategies and evidence of effective approaches, the concept note builds on a review of academic studies. The central points of the concept note have been validated and nuanced in interviews with two researchers in the field. However, it must be emphasised that the evidence of effective preventive strategies and interventions is scarce as most studies focuses on activities and short-term results.

The concept note includes the following paragraphs:

- Defining radicalisation (what)
- Understanding the causes of radicalisation (why)
- Understanding enablers of radicalisation on and off-line (how)
- Prevention strategies to radicalisation and violent extremism: main traits
- Prevention strategies to radicalisation and violent extremism: what works?
- EU policy to prevent (online) radicalisation leading to violent extremism

Defining radicalisation (*what*)

The concept of radicalisation as a process is central to European prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism⁸⁸. European prevention strategies often refer to violent extremism and terrorism as stemming from an individual or collective radicalisation process, which eventually can legitimise the use of violence or other illegal acts (committed by the individual itself or others) for political goals⁸⁸. Thus, it is this process that prevention strategies and interventions seek to turn around. To develop targeted and effective strategies and interventions, a deep understanding of the process of radicalisation is crucial. Despite more or less differing concepts and understandings of radicalisation, scholars tend to agree on describing radicalisation as a multi-level process consisting of several stages, which may take place in the short- or long-term, and that may be influenced by a variety of push and pull factors⁸⁹. A systematic review by Christmann⁹⁰ identifies common features across empirical studies:

⁸⁸ EUCPN (2019), European Crime Prevention Monitor 2019/1: Radicalisation and violent extremism. Brussels: European Crime Prevention Network

⁸⁹ Hardy, K. (2018), Comparing Theories of Radicalisation with Countering Violent Extremism Policy

⁹⁰ Christmann, K. (2012): Preventing religious radicalisation and violent extremism: A systematic review of the research evidence. UK: Youth Justice Board for England and Wales.

Table 11: Definition of radicalisation

” Despite the identification of different stages in the radicalization process, all studies agree that there is a stage of individual change (for example, increase in religiosity, search for identity) that is enhanced through external aspects (for example, experienced discrimination or racism, or a perceived attack against Muslims such as the wars in Bosnia and Iraq), and a move to violent radicalization, usually taking place when the individual socializes with like-minded people. These stages are not necessarily sequential, and they can also overlap, meaning that a person may skip a stage in reaching militant action or alternatively may become disillusioned at any given point and abandon the process altogether.” (Christmann, K., 2012:21)

According to several authors, radicalisation does not necessarily lead to the individual’s or group’s engagement in physical violence, among these acts of terrorism⁹¹. Nonetheless, political discourses tend to focus on *violent* extremism and terrorism as the endpoint of radicalisation⁹². This is also evident in a European context. In its 2005 Communication, the European Commission defined “violent radicalisation” as the “phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to terrorism”⁹³. More recently, the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) referred to radicalisation as the “process through which an individual comes to adopt extremist political, social, or religious ideas and aspirations which then serve to reject diversity, tolerance and freedom of choice, and legitimise breaking the rule of law and using violence towards property and people”⁹⁴. As such, radicalisation is defined as the *process* of which the endpoint is violent actions/extremism, although the individual process towards this end point may not be direct nor necessarily end there⁹⁵.

Berger provides a comprehensive working definition of violent extremism (as the endpoint of radicalisation), which he refers to as “the belief that an in-group’s success or survival can never be separated from the need for hostile action against an out-group. The hostile action must be part of the in-group’s definition of success. Hostile acts can range from verbal attacks and diminishment to discriminatory behaviour, violence, and even genocide”⁹⁶.

The concepts of extremism as the endpoint of radicalisation covers both left-wing and right-wing extremism, ethno-nationalist and religious extremism⁹⁷. It is important to note that although in recent years research focused on right-wing extremism has increased as right-wing extremism is gaining ground, a large fraction of the literature behind the root causes of radicalisation and extremism is based on Islamist extremism and jihadist terrorism, which therefore limits the scope of the results⁹⁸.

⁹¹ Schmid (2013); EUCPN (2019)

⁹² Hardy (2018); Ramboll, (2018), Mapping of knowledge of extremism and prevention of extremism; Neumann, P. R. (2013), The trouble with radicalisation; Borum, R. (2012), "Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories.", Journal of Strategic Security 4, no. 4: 7-36

⁹³ European Commission (2005), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council concerning Terrorist recruitment: addressing the factors contributing to violent radicalisation, p. 2

⁹⁴ Lenos, S. et al. (2017), RAN polarization management manual, RAN ex post paper, p. 5

⁹⁵ Borum, R. (2012), "Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories." Journal of Strategic Security 4, no. 4: 7-36

⁹⁶ Berger, J.M., (2018), Extremism [The MIT Press Essential Knowledge Series, p. 44

⁹⁷ Muro, D. (2016), What does radicalisation look like? Four visualisations of socialisation into violent extremism, Notes internacionais CIDOB; Europol (2021), European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg

⁹⁸ Ramboll (2018)

Understanding the causes of radicalisation (*why*)

There is no linear pathway, nor fixed set of characteristics, that uniquely explain individual vulnerability to radicalisation and engagement in violent extremism⁹⁹. In recent years, individuals involved in terrorist activities were found to belong to heterogeneous social backgrounds while undergoing diverse processes of violent radicalisation and being influenced by various motivations¹⁰⁰. In turn, the existence of a specific “terrorist personality” - characterised by mental and social fragility, abnormality or irrationality - associated with engagement in violent extremism and terrorism - has been excluded in the literature¹⁰¹.

However, while research has not been able to establish direct causal links between root causes and radicalisation leading to violent extremism, there is consensus that radicalisation and extremism is created in a highly complex interplay involving multiple factors at individual level, group level and societal level¹⁰². The radicalisation process is personal and unique.

Firstly, the individual level focuses on the factors of significance to the individual's risk of or vulnerability to radicalisation. The individual's lack of self-esteem and a sense of identity and purpose, an uncertain existence or unstable family situation are potential risk factors¹⁰³. At the opposite end of the self-esteem continuum is narcissistic personality traits which in some cases constitute a risk factor on the individual level¹⁰⁴.

Secondly, the group level focuses on the dynamics and factors of significance to the emergence and maintenance of extremist groups, as well as groups' ideologies and narratives and their recruitment, propaganda and communication. This may, for example, include social interactions in groups, the significance of the ideology to extremism, or the role of social media in relation to recruitment¹⁰⁵. Research indicates that the individual's lack of self-esteem and a sense of identity in interplay with group dynamics is one of the most important factors in the radicalisation process. The lack of self-esteem and a sense of identity and purpose can result in the need to join a cause and feel valued by others. Extremist groups can satisfy and exploit this psychological need. Furthermore, while the link between political grievances and/or ideological convictions on the one hand, and radicalisation leading to extremism on the other hand, is uncertain, research suggest that both play a crucial role in extremist groups' recruitment and propaganda in terms of providing meaning and legitimisation.¹⁰⁶

One of the most apparent characteristics of today's violent extremism in Europe appears to be the disproportionate participation of the youth in Jihadist terrorism, as well as the increasing number of young people linked to violent right-wing groups, especially online¹⁰⁷. As a result of a lack of self-esteem and of a strong sense of identity, young people tend to be more easily manipulated or coerced by terrorist groups to adopt an extremist ideology. Nonetheless, similarly to other individual-level characteristics, age cannot be considered as

⁹⁹ Harper, E. (2018), Reconceptualizing the drivers of violent extremism: an agenda for child & youth resilience;

¹⁰⁰ Europol (2020), European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report; Europol (2021), European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report

¹⁰¹ Bigo, D. et al. (2014), Preventing and countering youth radicalisation in the EU, Document requested by the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE); Schmid (2013)

¹⁰² Ramboll (2018)

¹⁰³ Ramboll (2018), Hardy (2018)

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Interview with Academic

¹⁰⁵ Ramboll (2018)

¹⁰⁶ Hardy (2018).

¹⁰⁷ Harper, (2018); Orav (2015); Abbas, T. (Ed.), (2007), Islamic political radicalism: a European perspective, Edinburgh University Press; Europol (2021), European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg

a direct and causal factor in the identification of most vulnerable profiles and may rather come into play alongside other context-specific and content-related factors.

Thirdly, the societal level focuses on the general societal dynamics and factors in the surrounding society that are of significance to extremism¹⁰⁸. Research rejects that socio-economic disadvantage in itself causes individuals or groups to be radicalised. Most individuals experiencing socio-economic disadvantage do not become radicalised. However, socio-economic disadvantage can aggravate perceptions of injustice and discrimination on individual, group or international level, and hence play a role in radicalisation¹⁰⁹. In continuation of this, while most socio-economic disadvantaged people do not radicalise, most individuals who do radicalise experience real socio-economic disadvantage. For instance, research point to a higher prevalence of radicalisation in vulnerable neighbourhoods than in middle class neighbourhoods. Thus, socio-economic disadvantage is not a causal factor, but it does in many cases contribute to the individual's or group's radicalisation process¹¹⁰.

To summarise, several interlinked factors at societal, group and individual level may play a role in the individual's or group's radicalisation process. The societal level provides the broader framework for the emergence and maintenance of the extremist group, both ideologically and socially, and for the recruitment, propaganda and communication activities of the extremist group. The group level – including the individual's network – further contributes to the maintenance of, and adherence to, an extremist group by reinforcing beliefs and worldview and creating a sense of belonging. In turn, individual-level push and pull factors may come into play throughout the radicalisation process, as they contribute to individual vulnerability¹¹¹. The complex nature of the radicalisation process and the absence of common pathways among those becoming radicalised challenges the identification of target groups, hence the development of tailored-made prevention strategies¹¹².

At a more specific level, the literature points to a multitude of possible factors contributing - interacting with each other and in conjunction with a range of additional contextual and individual -level elements - to the development of violent extremist groups and to people's decision to join them and to conduct violence to pursue their ideology¹¹³. A review of the existing research allows for the drafting of an overview of the potential push factors (i.e., the personal conditions and structural context of specific individuals pushing the individual towards violent extremism) and pull factors (i.e., individual motivations and processes contributing to the transformation of ideas and grievances into violent extremist action) that may play a role in the individual process. Given these premises, examples of push and pull factors are respectively summarised in the figure below.

¹⁰⁸ Ramboll (2018)

¹⁰⁹ Hardy (2018)m Ramboll (2018)

¹¹⁰ Cf., interview with Academic

¹¹¹ Ramboll (2018), Mapping of knowledge of extremism and prevention of extremism

¹¹² Harper (2018); Orav (2015)

¹¹³ UNDP (2015), Discussion paper - Root Causes of Radicalization in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

Table 12 - Examples of push and pull factors

	Push factors	Pull factors
Individual socio-psychological factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alienation, exclusion, isolation • Emotional vulnerability (e.g., anger, frustration) • Trauma and personal tragedies • Fascination with violence • Perceived oppression (of group, country or religion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from fellow radicals, community and friendship • Sense of adventure • Obtention of respect and status within the group • Feeling of power and control • Sense of heroism • Sense of belonging
Socio-economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disadvantaged socio-economic situations • Relative deprivation • Unstable family background • Living in precarious urban conditions • Social exclusion • Marginalisation and discrimination (real or perceived) • Limited social mobility • Limited education or employment • Criminality • Lack of social cohesion • Feeling ghettoised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material rewards for joining the group
Political factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State failure • Individual or in-group repression • Western foreign policy and military intervention (in particular in the middle Eastern conflict) • Governments' failure to provide certain services • State failure and anarchy • Violation of human rights and the rule of law • Prolonged and unresolved conflicts • Perceived global injustice • Anti/pro-migration policies • Perceived or actual biases of government action against in-group • Multiculturalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of certain services
Cultural, ideological and religious dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural marginalisation • Search for personal, religious or ethnic identity among those who feel their identity has been undermined by rapid social change • Cultural repression of minorities • Perceived normalised racism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found purpose • Clear rule of life to adhere to • Personal redemption

Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

Understanding enablers of radicalisation on and off-line (*how*)

There exist two types of generally recognised modes through which a person can be radicalised, namely recruitment and self-radicalisation. None of the modes do solely owe to the interplay of push and pull factors; they also depend on the existence of enablers¹¹⁴.

Recruitment represents the primary mode of radicalisation and is the process through which members of a terrorist or extremist organisation actively recruit new members. It can happen either in person or online or, most often, through a combination of on and off-line activities¹¹³. In either case, **influence of peer networks and/or charismatic recruiters constitute the primary enabler of individuals' involvement in extremist groups**; most individuals are recruited through contacts with active members, through kinship or friendship, attracted by the recognition and a sense of belonging offered by the group¹¹⁵. Indeed, radicalisation is often triggered by psychological needs (i.e., lack of self-esteem and a sense of identity and purpose) in interplay with group dynamics offering meaning and belonging as well as by personal life situations and experiences¹¹⁶. A review of the literature reveals that contacts between members of extremist groups and potential new members are mostly formed within disadvantaged environments, such as vulnerable neighbourhoods and prisons¹¹⁷. Religious centres have also been identified as likely places for recruitment

¹¹⁴ Harper, E. (2018) Reconceptualizing the drivers of violent extremism: an agenda for child & youth resilience

¹¹⁵ Bigo, D. et al. (2014); Harper (2018); interview with Academic

¹¹⁶ Hardy (2018); Lara-Cabrera R. et al., (2017), Measuring the Radicalisation Risk in Social Networks, Special section on heterogeneous crowdsourced data analytics, IEEE Access

¹¹⁷ Ramboll (2018); Europol (2021); interviews with Academics

regarding religious-inspired extremism. In addition, research has found that individuals are often recruited in mundane places, such as cafés and gym clubs¹¹⁸.

Self-radicalisation is defined as the process of embracing radical beliefs without the support or active involvement of a group, hence primarily through the consumption of online content, without requiring affiliation¹¹⁹. In that connection, **information technology – including the internet – is considered the main enabler of radicalisation**¹²⁰.

While increased risk of self-radicalisation has recently gained greater attention among policymakers due to the growing role played by the Internet and social media as platforms to spread terrorist propaganda, as a result of ISIS-inspired attacks where perpetrators were inspired by, but not members of, ISIS, and, more recently as a result of the isolation induced by anti-COVID-19 restrictions, online content and interactions rarely represent the sole factors enabling radicalisation. **Most often, the individual's exposure to extremist material online is paralleled by off-line group networks and social relationships**¹²¹.

In connection with both modes of radicalisation, a growing body of evidence suggest that **violent extremist narratives** work as a trigger for radicalisation by changing attitudes and impeding counter arguments. The objective of violent extremist narratives is to present a social construction of the world – typical a simplistic one with a clear-cut means-end configuration as well as protagonists and antagonists - which serves the interest of the narrator. In other words, extremist narratives justify violent action by positing that the group's goals can only be achieved through violence against the out-group¹²².

In most recent decades, the internet has also become a flourishing environment for recruitment. It has come to play a central role in influencing the radicalisation process, by facilitating access to a network of radicalised people by vulnerable individuals, and vice-versa¹²³. Social media (e.g., Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr) have contributed to online radicalisation by serving as recruitment assets, live fora, and sharing platforms. In addition, social media allows extremist organisations to easily access the profiles of potential recruits online, enabling them to better target their selected audience. Internet services such as blogs, web pages, fora, emails and peer to peer messaging applications provide additional instruments to disseminate extremist propaganda and provide exchange opportunities. Moreover, the use of video games and game communication applications, particularly by right-wing groups to spread terrorist and extremist propaganda, has been following an increasing trend over recent years, putting younger age groups at higher risk of exposure to extremist content¹²⁴.

To provide an indicative example of the use of online content in the radicalisation process, a recent study conducted by the UK Ministry of Justice found that in England and Wales the role of the internet has increased in prominence over the period 2005-2017 (the figure

¹¹⁸ Bigo, D. et al. (2014), Preventing and countering youth radicalisation in the EU, Document requested by the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE)

¹¹⁹ Hollewell G.F., Longpré N., (2021), Radicalization in the Social Media Era: Understanding the Relationship between Self-Radicalization and the Internet. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*

¹²⁰ Hardy (2018)

¹²¹ Hardy (2018); Lara-Cabrera R. et al., (2017), Measuring the Radicalisation Risk in Social Networks, Special section on heterogeneous crowdsourced data analytics, *IEEE Access*; Bigo, D. et al. (2014); Winter, C., Neumann, P., Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., Ranstorp, M., Vidino, L., Fürst, J. (2020), Online extremism: Research trends in internet activism, radicalization, and counter-strategies. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, 14(2), 1-20, Europol (2021); European Commission (2021), Strategic orientations on a coordinated EU approach to prevention of radicalisation for 2021, priorities and key actions

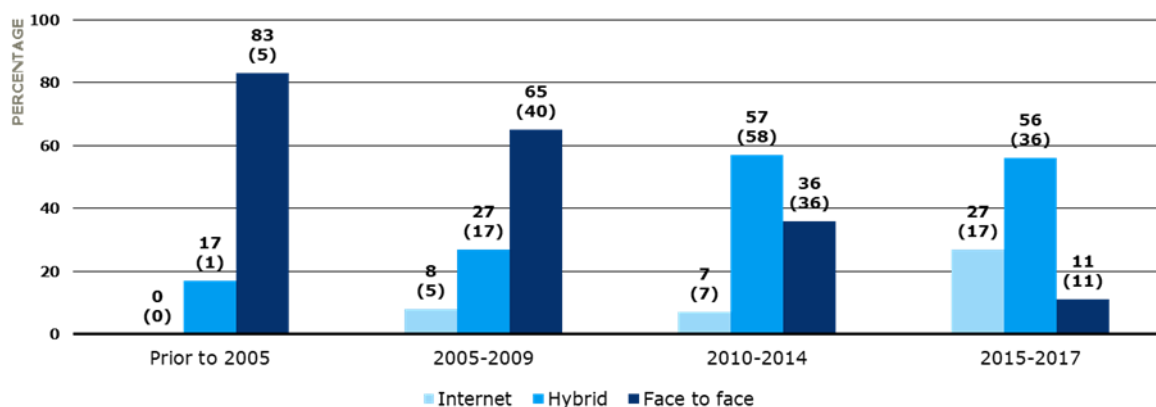
¹²² Carthy, S. et al. (2020), Counter-narratives for the prevention of violent radicalisation: A systematic review of targeted interventions

¹²³ Harper (2018); EUCPN (2019)

¹²⁴ Europol (2021), RAN (2020), Extremists' Use of Video Gaming – Strategies and Narratives, Conclusion paper, RAN C&N meeting – Extremists' use of video gaming – Strategies and narratives; Schlegel, L. (2021), Extremists' use of gaming (adjacent) platforms - Insights regarding primary and secondary prevention measures, RAN Practitioners

below). Most notably, the research outlined a key shift over time from the number of individuals convicted of extremist offences radicalised on online sources compared with offline sources (i.e., meeting face-to-face). This shift has been broadly correlated with societal shifts more generally towards greater use of online platforms and content. Thus, while the internet has brought about innumerable changes to people’s lives, primarily through enhanced communication tools, so too has it laid the foundation for a new and powerful platform for radicalisation.

Figure 33 - Percentages and frequencies of cases showing the primary method of radicalisation for ‘Radicalised Extremists’ over time



N.B. Values are percentages, with values in parentheses referring to absolute numbers. Adaptation based on source: Kenyon, J, Binder, J, Baker-Beall, C. (2021). Exploring the role of the Internet in radicalisation and offending of convicted extremists¹²⁵.

In recent years extremist content has progressively moved from big platforms to smaller, niche, channels due to an increased regulatory (and societal) pressure on platforms led to enforce their terms and conditions (T&C) regarding violent and extremist content, hate speech etc¹²⁶. Consequently, extremist groups have ‘polished’ their language on the main platforms and social networks to remain within the T&C rules, using the mainstream channels to identify new recruits as they still ensure the largest reach and then signpost more extremist content elsewhere, mainly web hosting platforms or other platforms which do not have strong moderation rules or encrypted messaging apps like Telegram¹²⁷.

The most recent trend in online radicalisation is through gaming, which is an evolving channel for recruitment that is difficult to moderate and penetrate¹²⁸. Overall, extremist groups can use gaming-related content to recruit new members and further their goals in six ways, of which three is considered to have the most impact: the use of gaming (adjacent) platforms as social spaces to radicalise and recruit new members; the use of gaming cultural references to tailor the language of propaganda to the target group; and gamification, i.e., the use of design elements of existing games (e.g., first person shooter games) in a non-gaming-context as a motivational tool aimed at behavioural change.¹²⁹ In summary, terrorist and violent extremist organisations constantly adapt their (online) communication strategy, staying ahead of the evolution of the information ecosystem.

¹²⁵ Kenyon, J., Binder, J. and Baker-Beall, C., 2021. Exploring the role of the Internet in radicalisation and offending of convicted extremists. HM Prison and Probation Service; Ministry of Justice Analytical Series.

¹²⁶ UK Parliament (2020), Online Extremism, Postnote; Kirdemir, B. (2020), Evolution of Violent Extremist and Terrorist Threats on Social Web, Edam, Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies

¹²⁷ Walther, S., McCoy, A. (2021), US Extremism on Telegram: Fueling Disinformation, Conspiracy Theories, and Accelerationism. Perspectives on Terrorism, 15(2), 100–124, <https://www.istor.org/stable/27007298>; Saltman, E. (2021), Challenges in Combating Terrorism and Extremism Online, Lawfare

¹²⁸ 124

¹²⁹ RAN (2020)

As mentioned above, recruitment of new members to a terrorist or extremist organisation most often happens through a combination of on- and off-line activities¹¹³. In continuation of this, it is a crucial point that the on/off-line divide that some P/CVE interventions is based on is imagined. Digital natives do not experience a distinction between on- and off-line communication, interaction and relations, it is all entangled and part of their immediate reality. For instance, young people watch propaganda videos or talk to members of extremist organisations online while being physically present in the same place. In that way, online and off-line communication and interaction increase each other's influence on the individual in risk of radicalisation. Thus, the idea of online radicalisation, and P/CVE programmes and interventions that solely address the online aspect of radicalisation risk to be less effective than holistic interventions¹³⁰.

Prevention strategies to radicalisation and violent extremism: main traits

Preventive strategies constitute a key pillar within broader policies aimed at reducing the likelihood of individuals engaging in radicalisation and violent extremism. The bulk of the literature regarding preventive strategies focuses on the design and implementation of interventions aimed at addressing the root causes of extremism as highlighted above. These interventions are typically known under the umbrella term “**preventing and countering violent extremism**” (P/CVE)¹³¹. As academics recognise that terrorism ‘is not simply violence but communication’, the focus of P/CVE interventions and its surrounding research has primarily been on how to respond strategically to the communication of extremist groups online and offline¹³².

Given the role of the internet and social media in enabling radicalisation, P/CVE communication strategies find significant applicability within online platforms. This means that identifying signs of online extremism and elaborating tailored strategies to prevent online radicalisation stand as an increasingly pressing matter on policymakers' agenda¹¹⁹. In recent years, however, scholars have recommended that P/CVE interventions should also incorporate offline activities to develop trust and safe spaces for individuals in the target groups¹³³.

A review of the literature surrounding radicalisation prevention efforts identified three main objectives when approaching individuals or groups deemed at risk of radicalisation or that are already radicalised. These included:

- **Development of knowledge and capacity among individuals**, aiming at increasing individuals' knowledge and skills on relevant topics – such as democracy, tolerance and respect for other cultures – and often targeting children and young people. These types of measures are designed to contribute to individual capacity for critical reflection and thought, as well as to the wider adoption of democratic values, respect and tolerance for the opinion of others, and increased empathy and moral understanding.
- **Raising awareness on extremism and its consequences**, consisting in the provision of information on how extremism can affect other individuals and society. This is done primarily by means of counter-narrative campaigns and is aimed at counteracting extremist lifestyle, ideology and propaganda. This form of initiative is

¹³⁰ Cf. interviews with Academics

¹³¹ White, J. (2021), Interventions Targeting Youth Engagement - A Systematic Literature Review of Effectiveness of Counter-Terrorism and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Activities, Royal United Services Institute, Published by Policy and Operations Evaluation Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

¹³² Glazzard, A. & Reed, A., Beyond Prevention: The Role of Strategic Communications Across the Four Pillars of Counterterrorism Strategy

¹³³ RAN Event – Member States Workshop (2022), Conclusions Paper; Jones & Freear (2021): Consolidated Overview Paper: Lessons Learned from Strategic Communication and Alternative and Counter Narrative Campaigns

intended to increase individual awareness of the consequences of one's actions, as well as enhance capacity for critical reflection with respect to alternative opinions and societal perceptions¹¹⁷.

- **Provision of support and guidance at vulnerable stages of life**, including actions intended to support young people and adults at risk of radicalisation to choose an alternative path, and individuals who are part of extremist groups in their way out of these environments¹¹⁷. Some interventions aim to involve the family, network, or the local community as a caring family and network, and strong community cohesion is thought to work as attractive forces strong enough to compete with extremist groups. Finally, preventive interventions targeted at front-line personnel such as teachers and social workers aim to build capacity to identify and act on signs of worry¹³⁴.

To achieve the above-mentioned targets, P/CVE communication strategies, both online and offline, have become a key component of preventive policy and programming. In the literature, a distinction is often made between **counter-narratives and alternative narratives**. There is a significant ambiguity regarding the definitions of these concepts in the literature as the terms are defined in a variety of ways and often used interchangeably. This is particularly the case regarding the use of the term “counter-narratives”, which has been used as a label for “anything from a ‘simple rebuttal’ to an umbrella term of ‘programmes of strategic communication’¹³⁵.

At its most basic level, however, scholars generally agree that counter-narratives aim to “address the underlying logic of a dominant narrative” and is thus inherently reactive. Conversely, alternative narratives do not directly address violent extremist content, but rather aim at providing positive stories, “focusing on what we are for rather than against”. **This is relevant in relation to the first M – Message – in the GAMMA+ model.**

Given the complex nature of P/CVE programmes, their target audience and the variety of stakeholders involved, the evaluation of such programmes poses significant challenges, while the literature lacks useful metrics to measure the efficacy of strategic communications¹³⁶. Among these challenges is the use of so-called “**vanity metrics**” that often provide impressive sounding numbers through social media analytics, such as a high number of views or clicks, but do not reveal much about the actual impact regarding the aim of preventing individuals becoming radicalised¹³⁷. Additionally, collecting relevant data material for assessing the impact of P/CVE interventions is challenging and thus resource demanding, which is often beyond the capacities of typical project initiatives. It is a widespread challenge in relation to P/CVE that thorough monitoring and evaluation that is considered from the inception phase and throughout programmes/projects is given a low priority.

Finally, the P/CVE interventions often suffer from a lack of providing a robust theory of change consistent with the insights from the literature¹³⁵. This has been attributed to a sense of urgency surrounding radicalisation and violent extremism leading to an approach of “let's just try something” where interventions are developed without a clear concept of why and how individuals are expected to react to the interventions¹³⁸. In sum, rigorous and empirically grounded evaluation of P/CVE interventions is urgently needed as there is currently an

¹³⁴ Rambol (2018)

¹³⁵ Jones, M. (2020): Through the Looking Glass – Assessing the Evidence Base for P/CVE Communications

¹³⁶ RAN (2021), Effective and Realistic Quality Management and Evaluation of P/CVE, Conclusion paper, RAN small-scale expert meeting; Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union (2017), Countering terrorist narratives, Policy department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional affairs

¹³⁷ Tuck, H. & Silverman, T. (2016): The Counter Narrative Handbook, Institute for Strategic Dialogue.

¹³⁸ Warrington, A. (2018): ‘Sometimes you just have to try something’ - A critical analysis of Danish state-led initiatives countering online radicalisation

overwhelming lack of evidence of what works and does not work, not least in relation to strategic communications as a feature of P/CVE programmes¹³⁹.

Prevention strategies to radicalisation and violent extremism: what works?

Nonetheless, although research and evidence of the impacts of P/CVE interventions are very limited, some insights may be derived from existing literature concerning both their limitations and most promising aspects for each of the three above-mentioned objectives and across objectives¹⁴⁰.

Regarding the development of knowledge and capacity, P/CVE interventions have been associated with an improvement in critical thinking and media literacy, which was conducive to enhanced self-regulation and individual resilience. In particular, providing the youth with the tools needed to safely navigate social media was proven to be relatively effective in mitigating wider anti-social behaviour. Whether campaigns and interventions aiming at strengthening critical thinking and media literacy have a preventive or even mitigating effect on radicalisation is unsure in terms of evidence, but it is likely to contribute positively¹⁴¹. When conducting these types of training programmes or courses, studies find that activities using **co-creation** as a tool have shown positive outcomes in terms of capacity building. An example of such a co-creation activity was two initiatives where young people were trained to create and run their own social media campaigns¹⁴².

The suggested mechanism for the positive effects of co-creation is that it bridges the gap between “talking” and “acting”, which increases the credibility of the message and messenger to address grievances and feelings of exclusion experienced by individuals of the target groups. Accordingly, programmes that enables youth leadership are perceived as the “gold standard” of P/CVE.

Regarding raising awareness of extremism and its consequences, counter-narratives have in some cases seemed to provide content that enhanced the consideration of different viewpoints and critical thinking. However, the general picture is that evidence of effects on reducing the feeling of threat and out-group hostility through counter-narratives is inhibited by the lack of data mentioned above. For counter-narratives relying on persuasion techniques, the literature even suggests that such attempts might result in **boomerang effects** among radicalised people which might exacerbate their extreme attitudes¹⁴³. The literature suggests that this can be attributed to the fact that individuals generally tend to reject information and arguments at odds with their strong baseline attitudes. Counter-narratives that address the violent strategy can make sense (the message being “we do not reject your experience of social injustice or political grievance, but violence is not the solution”), while narratives that argue with the grievance or perception of social injustice might be counter-productive¹⁴⁴. In other words, **exposure is not synonymous with persuasion**, which underlines that the use of vanity metrics to quantify behavioural change should be avoided¹⁴².

Instead, recent literature suggests that **alternative narratives** generally could be viewed as a preferable option compared to the counter-narratives approach. By offering

¹³⁹ White (2021): Interventions Targeting Youth Engagement - A Systematic Literature Review of Effectiveness of Counter-Prevention strategies to radicalisation and violent extremism: main traits; RAN (2022): Event Conclusion Paper: Member states workshop

¹⁴⁰ Jones (2020); Ramboll (2018); Freear, M., Glazzard, A. (2020) Preventive Communication: Emerging Lessons from Participative Approaches to Countering Violent Extremism in Kenya, The RUSI Journal, 165:1, 90-106

¹⁴¹ Interview with Academic

¹⁴² Jones, M. & Freear, M. (2021): Consolidated Overview Paper: Lessons Learned From Strategic Communication and Alternative and Counter Narrative Campaigns

¹⁴³ Carthy, S. et al (2020): Counter-narratives for the prevention of violent radicalisation: A systematic review of targeted interventions

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Academic

opportunities to be proactive and creative rather than simply appealing to reason or self-interest, alternative narratives have been found to reduce overall risk factors for violent radicalisation, particularly regarding realistic threat perceptions, in-group favouritism and out-group hostility¹⁴³. **This is relevant in relation to the call for Action in the GAMMMA+ model.**

To enable the **provision of support and guidance at vulnerable stages of life**, the literature strongly suggests the use of integrated interventions leveraging a **holistic approach** for strategic communications as a driver for impact. This means, for instance, that online message campaigns should be supplemented within a wider set of activities offline to strengthen trust and the tangibility of the intervention within the target groups¹⁴⁵. In continuation of this, research strongly suggests a positive effect of involving family members, friends and other individuals who can leverage influence on individuals at risk of radicalisation. Especially family members can act as support functions preventing the individual from being absorbed in extremist groups. Furthermore, research indicates that capacity building focusing on prevention, identification and handling of radicalisation among front-line personnel such as teachers and social workers can be a driver for preventive strategies. However, some studies point to a possible unintended effect of capacity building in terms of creating opposition among teachers who do not want to be responsible for the identification of students at risk of radicalisation¹⁴⁶.

Across all three objectives, some general, cross-cutting drivers and barriers for impact of P/CVE interventions have been suggested in the literature.

Firstly, recent literature has emphasized the importance of **tailoring the interventions** to specific, hyper-local target groups. This requires a deep understanding of not just the demographics of the target groups, but more importantly also their interests and concerns¹⁴². In other words, the effectiveness of P/CVE interventions depends on a granular and contextual understanding of the issues and parties at stake¹⁴⁷, that cannot be achieved through desk-research or surveys alone. **This corresponds to the Audience in the GAMMMA+ model.**

Secondly, choosing the right **messenger** for campaigns, dialogues and one-to-one engagements is considered a key element for the effectiveness of any P/CVE intervention. Such a choice is context-dependent and contributes to the authenticity of the message delivered. The involvement of **formers to tell their story and point to the downside of extremism** is considered of particular use for this objective as the target group often perceives formers as a credible source to deconstruct extremist messages¹⁴⁸. Recruiting “ambassadors”, who recognise the message of the campaigns as their own, is difficult (among others, because due diligence is challenging), but considered to have significant positive effects on the impact of the interventions¹⁴². **This is relevant in relation to the second M - Messenger - in the GAMMMA+ model.**

Thirdly, according to the literature, a major issue is that many projects can be characterized as **one-off initiatives** with a limited reach, scale, and duration, which reduces the potential long-term impact of the interventions¹⁴⁹. Instead, P/CVE projects need to communicate the message continuously and in multiple formats¹⁵⁰. There is a discrepancy between the

¹⁴⁵ Jones, M. & Freear, M. (2021): Consolidated Overview Paper: Lessons Learned From Strategic Communication and Alternative and Counter Narrative Campaigns; RAN (2022): Event Conclusion Paper: Member states workshop; Jones, M. (2020): Through the Looking Glass – Assessing the Evidence Base for P/CVE Communications

¹⁴⁶ Ramboll (2018)

¹⁴⁷ British Council (2020), Community of Practice on Preventing Violent Extremism, Building Pathways: What works on developing young people’s resilience to violent extremism; interviews with Alexander Ritzmann and Lasse Lindekilde.

¹⁴⁸ Tuck, H. & Silverman, T. (2016): The Counter-Narrative Handbook; interview with Academic

¹⁴⁹ Jones, M. & Freear, M. (2021): Consolidated Overview Paper: Lessons Learned From Strategic Communication and Alternative and Counter Narrative Campaigns; RAN (2022): Event Conclusion Paper: Member states workshop

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Academic

duration of the radicalisation process and its effects compared to how much time P-CVE projects run.

Finally, although not a major theme in the literature, the lack of systematic evaluation and thus strong evidence of what works hinders the implementation of efficient P/CVE interventions.

To provide an overall checklist for the evaluation of P/CVE projects, the following table sums up the key definitions, objectives, challenges and recommendations regarding the design and implementation of P/CVE interventions:

Box 10 - Overview of main traits of preventions strategies towards radicalisation

Definitions	Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P/CVE: Umbrella-term for measures to prevent and counter violent extremism • Counter-narratives: Aim at directly countering extremists' proposition • Alternative narratives: Provide positive stories focusing on "what we are for, rather than against" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of knowledge and capacity among individuals, often young people • Raising awareness on extremism and its consequences through information • Provision of support and guidance at vulnerable stages of life • Provision of support and guidance at vulnerable stages of life to support individuals to choose an alternative path
Challenges	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to obtain sufficient data to evaluate P/CVE impact • Monitoring and evaluation is a low priority • Evaluations often use vanity metrics, which do not provide evidence of impact • Some P/CVE projects lack a clear theory of change based on the literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative narratives deemed more viable than counter-narratives • Important to create opportunities for the target group to be proactive and creative • Important to tailor interventions to the specific, hyper-local target groups • Holistic approaches integrating online and offline activities are advised

EU policy to prevent (online) radicalisation and terrorism

While the origins of European counter-terrorism policy can be traced back to the 1970s, most significant advances in the field were made in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in the United States¹⁵¹. The perception of the terrorist threat as a global and borderless phenomenon led to the adoption of the Council Framework decision on combating terrorism¹⁵² in 2002¹⁵³. The terrorist attacks in Madrid and London, respectively in 2004 and 2005, further catalysed the development of EU policy in the field, resulting in the adoption

¹⁵¹ Wilkinson, P. (2005), International Terrorism: the changing threat and the EU's response, n. 84, Institute for Security Studies, Paris

¹⁵² Council Framework Decision of 13 June 2002 on combating terrorism (2002/475/JHA)

¹⁵³ Voronova, S. (2021), Briefing - Understanding EU counter-terrorism policy, European Parliament, Members' Research Service

of the first European **Counter-Terrorism Agenda**¹⁵⁴. Structured around four pillars - **prevention, protection, pursuit and response**, the new agenda was meant as a comprehensive strategy and action plan to combat radicalisation and recruitment into terrorism, to be achieved through the strengthening of national and collective capabilities, as well as through the promotion and facilitation of European and international cooperation. In this context, as the EU put in place numerous pieces of legislation and initiatives to counteract terrorism and extremism, measures to prevent violent radicalisation solidified as one of the primary pillars of European counter-terrorism action.

Terrorism and radicalisation were further identified as key EU-level policy priorities within the EU's first **Internal Security Strategy** (2010)¹⁵⁵, which identified serious and organised crime, terrorism, cybercrime, the management of external borders, as well as of natural and man-made disasters as the main challenges to be fought and prevented at an EU-wide level. As such, the EU's strategic actions to prevent terrorism and address radicalisation and recruitment over the 2011-2014 period were delineated within the Internal Security Agenda. These revolved around:

- Empowerment of communities to prevent radicalisation and recruitment;
- Cutting off terrorists' access to funding and materials and follow their transactions;
- Protection of transport.

Empowering the most vulnerable communities and, consequently, the most susceptible individuals within them, was delineated as one of the primary actions to prevent violent radicalisation. In this respect, the Commission foresaw close cooperation with local authorities and civil society, as well as the identification and targeting of the most vulnerable groups. With this purpose, the Commission set out the establishment of the **Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)**, officially founded in 2011¹⁵⁶. The RAN was conceived as a network of frontline practitioners - including law enforcement and security officials, local authorities, academics, field experts and civil society organisations – meant “to pool experiences, knowledge and good practices to enhance awareness of radicalisation and communication techniques for challenging terrorist narratives”.

In 2015, the Commission reiterated and further solidified counter-terrorism action among the EU's key security priorities with the adoption of the 2015-2020 **European Agenda on Security (EAS)**¹⁵⁷, followed by the Council's endorsement of the **Renewed European Union Internal Security Strategy** (July 2015)¹⁵⁸. The EAS identified terrorism and radicalisation, alongside organised crime and cybercrime, as Europe's three primary security concerns. In this context, the need to address the root causes of extremism and to tackle the diffusion of extremist propaganda led to the continued centralisation of preventive measures within the European counter-terrorism strategy. The Agenda set out a number of concrete actions aimed at preventing extremist violence, particularly with a focus on combating online radicalisation:

- Creation of the **European Counter-Terrorism Centre (ECTC)** within Europol, to function as an operations centre and hub of expertise to increase the support to Member States in terrorism fight and prevention.

¹⁵⁴ Council of the European Union (2005), The European Union counter-terrorism strategy

¹⁵⁵ European Commission (2010), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - The EU Internal Security Strategy in Action: Five steps towards a more secure Europe

¹⁵⁶ Radicalisation Awareness Network website: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/about-ran_en

¹⁵⁷ European Commission (2015), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - The European Agenda on Security

¹⁵⁸ Council of the European Union (2015), Renewed European Union Internal Security Strategy Implementation Paper

- Launch of the **EU Internet forum** in 2015, aimed at bringing together IT companies, law enforcement authorities and civil society, in order to foster efficient cooperation to counter terrorist propaganda on the internet and in social media.
- Establishment of the **Internet Referral Unit (IRU)** by Europol in 2015, with the goal of helping Member States to identify and remove violent extremist content online, in cooperation with industry partners.
- Re-prioritised actions under the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation on Education and Training, the European Youth Strategy, the EU Work Plan for Sport and the Culture Work Plan, which were foreseen in order to foster education, youth participation, interfaith and inter-cultural dialogue, as well as employment and social inclusion, identified as crucial means to support radicalisation prevention efforts.
- Launch of an impact assessment in 2015 aimed at updating the **Framework Decision on Terrorism**. A new **Directive on Terrorism**, replacing the Framework Decision, was eventually published in 2017¹⁵⁹.

In addition, the EAS underpinned the establishment of the **RAN Centre of Excellence**, meant to function as a knowledge hub and platform to exchange experiences, pool knowledge, identify best practices and develop new initiatives in tackling radicalisation, thus facilitating the pooling of relevant expertise and reinforcing initiatives in different policy areas¹⁶⁰.

Against this background, **countering the propagation of extremist narratives and terrorist propaganda online** acquired an increasingly important role, with EU action coming to revolve around two objectives¹⁶⁰:

- Restricting accessibility to terrorist content online, where Europol's IRU provides a key contribution;
- Empowering civil society partners to propagate positive counter-narratives, with a key contribution from the RAN, especially through the Civil Society Empowerment Programme;

Notably, in 2016, the Commission, together with Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Microsoft, introduced a **code of conduct** to combat the spread of illegal hate speech online in Europe, feeding into EU-wide efforts and initiatives to enable the quick reporting and removal of online hate speech and illegal content¹⁶¹. In addition, previously called Syrian Strategic Communications Advisory Team (SSCAT), the **European Strategic Communications Network (ESCN)** was launched in October 2016, conceived as a network of 27 Member States to share best practices on the use of strategic communications in countering violent extremism¹⁶². The ESCN ran until the end of 2019 and it was meant to be replaced by the RAN Policy Support, which however only started its activities in 2021.

¹⁵⁹ Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA

¹⁶⁰ European Commission (2016), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism

¹⁶¹ European Commission website (2016), European Commission and IT Companies announce Code of Conduct on illegal online hate speech, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_16_1937

¹⁶² Council of the European Union (2016), Implementation of the Counter-terrorism agenda set by the European Council

These priorities were endorsed by the **EU Security Union Strategy 2020-2025**¹⁶³, as well as by the new **Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU (2020)**¹⁶⁴. While Europol registered a downward trend in terrorist attacks in the EU in 2019¹⁶⁵, terrorism – specifically associated with Jihadist and right-wing extremism – was deemed as a primary threat to European citizens' safety¹⁶³. Hence, the 2020-2025 Security Union Strategy continued to identify terrorism and radicalisation as primary security concerns to be addressed at an EU-wide level. Specifically, **countering illegal content online** was pinpointed as a necessary step in ensuring security within both online and physical environments¹⁶³. Building upon the EU Security Union Strategy, the new EU Counter-Terrorism Agenda - structured around the same four pillars (anticipate, prevent, protect, and respond) as the 2005 Counter-Terrorism Strategy - continued to identify preventive measures as constituting one of the main axes of European counter-terrorism action. Prevention revolved around four priorities, namely:

- Countering extremist ideologies online;
- Supporting local actors for more resilient communities;
- Prisons, rehabilitation and reintegration;
- Consolidating knowledge and support.

With regards to the first aspect, the Commission highlighted the urgency behind the adoption of the **Regulation on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online** (adopted in April 2021)¹⁶⁶, and foresaw the proposal of a **Digital Services Act**, meant to upgrade the rules ensuring that digital services act responsibly and that users have access to the adequate means to report illegal content. Moreover, the **EU Internet Forum** was underlined as playing a central role in responding to the propagation of extremist material online, particularly through the **EU Crisis Response Protocol**, consisting of a voluntary mechanism of cooperation between Member States, Europol and tech companies to support the coordination of collective and cross-border response to the viral spread of terrorist content online during or in the aftermath of a terrorist attack.

Increased engagement with **international partners** (such as the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism) was foreseen to ensure concerted global efforts to tackle the spreading of terrorist content online, as well as to enforce minimum global standards. In order to respond to the proliferation of racist and xenophobic **hate speech** online, the Commission provided for an extension to the list of EU-level crimes under Article 83(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU to hate crime and hate speech, whether based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexuality. In turn, increased support was set to be provided to Member States to develop their **strategic communication** capabilities, among others, through the implementation of programmes similar to the **Civil Society Empowerment Programme**. In this sphere, it is worth noting the role of the **RAN Communication and Narratives Working Group**, which focuses on the delivery of both on- and offline strategic communications, providing support and gathering knowledge on alternative and counter-narratives to challenge extremist propaganda¹⁶⁷.

¹⁶³ European Commission (2020), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - On the EU Security Union Strategy

¹⁶⁴ European Commission (2020), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - A Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU: Anticipate, Prevent, Protect, Respond

¹⁶⁵ Europol (2020), European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg

¹⁶⁶ Regulation (EU) 2021/784 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online

¹⁶⁷ Communication and Narratives Working Group (RAN C&N) website: <https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/topics-and-working-groups/communication-and-en>

Empowering local actors and **increasing the resilience of communities** through ensuring access to funding, guidance and training, as well as through cooperation and communication among cities and communities, constitute a second key element within the Commission's terrorism prevention strategy. The **RAN Practitioners** plays a central role in supporting local prevent coordinators, as well as in identifying best practices and fostering approaches of community policing. Notably, in January 2021, a new branch of RAN was created, namely the **RAN Policy Support**. The latter is now tasked with providing support in the development of P/CVE policies, by bringing together a community of researchers, think tanks, CSOs, and members of the public and private sector that are involved in and have relevant knowledge of P/CVE¹⁶⁸. One of the three strands of work of the RAN Policy Support is providing support to EU Member States in the field of P-CVE strategic communications.

Management and risk assessment of **radicalised inmates and terrorist offenders**, as well as training of professionals in the field are also projected to receive increased support, given the recognition of prisons as likely breeding grounds for violent radicalisation. In addition, the Commission foresaw the provision of strengthened support to Member States to ensure adequate **rehabilitation** and **reintegration** of radical inmates.

Finally, in order to enhance coordinated European action in terrorism prevention, the Commission provided for the promotion of the development of **national networks** of relevant actors, alongside the creation of **national centres of expertise** and, eventually, an **EU knowledge Hub on prevention of radicalisation** for policymakers, practitioners and researchers. In addition, increasing research and guidance is set to be provided to Member States with respect to the phenomenon of **self-radicalisation**.

¹⁶⁸ RAN Policy Support website: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/ran-policy-support_en

Appendix 4. Scorecard analysis

Methodology of the Project Scorecard Analysis

The desk research task in this study aimed to gather and analyse data derived from a variety of secondary sources, ranging from legal and policy documents to programming documents, to project-level documents (i.e. GAMMMA+ and technical specifications) related to the CSEP-funded projects. Project scorecard as an analytical tool is the key element of the desk research component of the study. The purpose of the project scorecard was to identify the good and poor practices.

To develop the project scorecard, three methodological steps were taken:

- Refinement of questions according to evaluation questions matrix;
- Adaptation of the scorecard according to the GAMMMA+ model;
- Clarification of the categories of the quasi-quantitative and qualitative assessment;
- Integration of the project mapping tool with the project scorecard tool;
- Analysis of the findings and triangulation of scorecard data with other analytical tools of the study.

In the familiarisation interviews, stakeholders highlighted the importance of the GAMMMA+ model when reflecting on the effectiveness of the campaigns. As the scorecard was used to conduct a transversal analysis across the campaigns, the GAMMMA+ model and the input from the stakeholders at the inception stage were used to refine the methodological framework for identifying poor, medium and good practices.

Over 100 quasi-quantitative and qualitative questions were included in the scorecard based on the GAMMMA+ model to complete the information captured about the campaigns. Questions included in the scorecard covered all seven elements of the GAMMMA+ model.

To ensure a sound methodology and consistency in the scoring, the scorecard was completed with additional categories about the guidance on how to assign the score and a reference to the information source. The fine-tuning of the questions already included in the initial version of the preliminary scorecard was done by clarifying the assessment criteria for each question and replacing double-barrelled questions.

Quasi-quantitative and qualitative assessment categories were kept in the scorecard to gather descriptive data on key aspects of the campaigns. They have been updated with precise scoring in the tool. In terms of quasi-quantitative assessment, the scoring of binary (i.e., yes or no) and Likert scale (Not at all; to a small extent; to a moderate extent; to a large extent; and to a very large extent) has been re-scaled to start from '0' instead of '1' where the '0' stands either for "No" or "Not at all". This change in the scoring helps to assign an appropriate numerical value to a negative response to the scorecard questions. Qualitative assessment was further refined by the guidance on the scoring.

To streamline the process and ensure greater transparency in judgment on the scores, the questions from the project mapping tool have been integrated into the project scorecard template. The campaign analysis was streamlined through combining the project mapping tool and the excel based scorecard. This was done in the logic of removing the need for project documentation to be reviewed twice under each of separate tool. Reducing the manual data entry in different data collection tools helped to increase the accuracy in data collection and analysis. As a result, a consolidated scorecard "database" was adapted to include 220 questions which each of the projects were assessed against, covering questions from the EQM (primarily for the criterion of Effectiveness and Relevance) and questions in relation to the GAMMMA+ model. The scorecard was cross-checked against the evaluation question matrix to ensure the maximum use of the scorecard in answering the evaluation questions.

To ensure the consistency and quality of the data entry process, a quality check-in was organised among Study Team members after a minimum of three projects have been assessed using the project scorecard. In total, three quality checks were organised throughout the study.

The scorecard database included an analysis of the main project documentation that was provided to the Commission in each project. On average, the amount of project documentation that was reviewed per project was between 10 and 15 documents (approx. 200-300 documents consulted in total). This primarily included the following types of documentation:

- The grant agreement;
- The final periodic reporting (if the project was complete);
- Monitoring and evaluation reports;
- Campaign design material;
- Campaign assets (i.e. the communication activity outputs);
- Inception, interim and final reporting documents.

As in the case of the contextual analysis of this study, where gaps emerged in the project-level scorecard database, any missing information was prioritised as part of the project-level interviews and populated back into the scorecard to try and ensure data completeness.

The scorecard analysis allowed for a “score” to be given to each project, which enables the identification of poor, medium and good practices. It should be noted that this analysis does not intend to “spot-light” specific projects as being particularly successful/unsuccessful, but rather act as a tool to identify specific aspects of project practices which either worked or did not work. During the analysis stage, the quasi-quantitative questions were used to generate the score for each project. The qualitative assessment in combination with quasi-quantitative was used to develop the project fiches and provide qualitative insights on where the project has performed well.

In total there were 67 quasi-quantitative questions and subsequently, the maximum score for the projects was 67 points. Each answer to the quasi-quantitative questions was assigned a numerical value arranged in ascending order (i.e., ‘yes’ equalled ‘1’ and ‘no’ 0 and etc.). Since the quasi-quantitative binary and Likert scale categories were different, these scores were retrieved from each project scorecard and weighed from 0 to 1 which allowed turning all 67 quasi-quantitative questions into 67 points. After retrieval of scores, to come up with the scoring, the points have been aggregated per project and per category marking the maximum possible score for each element.

To demonstrate the assessment conducted the Study Team created the heatmap that summarises the scoring of the CSEP projects - it presents the CSEP interventions ordered from the highest to the lowest scored projects. As each element had a different amount of quasi-quantitative questions and this was taken into consideration when weighting the scores and creating the colour scheme. The colour scheme is based on a graded colour scale where red colour represents the lowest score, yellow represents the midpoint and green the highest score across projects under each category.

The section below presents the top-level findings of the project scorecard analysis and justification of scores assigned to each project. To ensure transparency in assessment, the Study Team is using ‘low’, ‘moderate’ and ‘high’ scores or success when describing the following results. Projects or categories that have reached the top 67% or more of the total score in any given category were considered highly successful, while between 66% to 34% were considered moderately successful and any score below 33% was considered not successful.

Top-level assessment of effectiveness

The preliminary scorecard analysis shows areas of moderate effectiveness, specifically in relation to the core elements of a project seeking to counter radicalisation.

- Findings show that the majority of projects reached moderate scores on the effectiveness of setting realistic goals and defining the overall logic of the campaigns, identifying clear target groups and tailoring the messages toward the intended target audience.
- The three elements of medium, messengers and monitoring and evaluation demonstrated higher success levels. This is mostly due to the fact that the majority of projects used several communications channels, engaged local civil society organisations, and community representatives in the project and put in place a monitoring and evaluation system.
- The lowest score was detected in relation to the call-to-action element, where only 47% of the maximum possible score was achieved. Even if the score is the lowest compared to other elements of the scorecard, it is still considered a moderate success.

Areas for improvement remain, especially concerning the execution and actionability of project goals; while the projects evaluated often had a good grasp of the conceptual elements of their campaigns, the practical application could have been better developed.

Evaluation of impact and effectiveness of counter- and alternative campaigns stemming from the CSEP programme aiming at preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism

Table 13 - Scorecard analysis

CSEP projects	Categories of GAMMMA+ Model (Top possible score per category)							Total score for each project (67 points)	% of Total
	Goals (13 points)	Audience (13 points)	Messages (11 points)	Messenger (7 points)	Medium (5 points)	Call to Action (8 points)	M&E (10 points)		
1 Oltre l'orizzonte	11.5	10.5	7.5	6.75	4	3	8.5	51.75	77%
2 YouthRightOn	10.25	10.25	8.5	5	4.5	5	8.25	51.75	77%
3 D.O.B.T.	9	9.75	7.5	2.25	3.75	6.75	8.25	47.25	71%
4 PRECOBIAS	6.75	9.25	8.5	4	5	5	8	46.5	69%
5 Project Grey	9	4.5	8.25	4.75	4.25	6	8.5	45.25	68%
6 Breaking the ISIS	9.25	8.25	4	5.75	4.75	4	8.5	44.5	66%
7 Action plan for Portugal	6.25	8.75	7.5	3.5	3.5	6.75	7	43.25	65%
8 RAGE	8.5	7.5	4.74	4.75	4.25	6.5	6.75	42.99	64%
9 DECOUNT	7.25	6.75	7.5	4.75	3.75	4.5	8.25	42.75	64%
10 EU (RVIEU)	9.5	6.5	7.5	6	2	2.75	8.25	42.5	63%
11 ONarVla	8.25	8	7.25	5	4.25	3	6.25	42	63%
12 CICERO	5.25	11	6	5.25	3.75	2	6.75	40	60%
13 GAMER	9	7.75	7.25	1.75	3.75	3	7	39.5	59%
14 Counteract	7.5	6.75	8.5	3	3.25	3	7.5	39.5	59%
15 Extremely EUnited	7.5	5	6	4	3.75	4	8.75	39	58%
16 (Re)think	6.5	5.75	5.25	4.25	4	3.5	8	37.25	56%
17 CONCORD	7.25	3	5.25	4.75	2.5	3.5	7.75	34	51%
18 OPEN	5	4.5	4.25	5.5	3.5	3	4.5	30.25	45%
19 EUROTOPIA	4.75	4.75	5.75	4.25	3	1.5	3.75	27.75	41%
20 COMMIT	5.5	9.5	5	1	2.25	1	2.25	26.5	40%
Total score per category	153.75	148.00	131.99	86.25	73.75	77.75	142.75		
% of total per category	59	57	60	62	74	49	71		
Maximum score per category	260	260	220	140	100	160	200		

Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

The following points present the main findings that originated from the scorecard.

- **Goals** - when assessing questions concerning the level of detail, measurability of the project goals and the clarity around their theory of change, most interventions were moderately effective (59% of the maximum possible score). Some of the projects assessed with the highest score include Oltre l'orizzonte, EU (RVIEU), YouthRightOn, GAMER and Breaking the ISIS. It can also be observed that some of these projects show strong scoring in other areas of the GAMMMA+ model. Despite some of the projects facing challenges with regard to the clarity of goals, they still managed to demonstrate moderate effectiveness in setting the right messages and bringing legitimate messengers, such as CICERO.
- **Audience** - the audience was another moderately-performing category for most projects (57% of the maximum possible score), with specific challenges across the board on questions concerning the narrowing down the scope of their audience and the definition of their lifestyles as well as their rational, emotional and hidden needs. For example, half of the projects, including Counteract and Project Gray do not segment their audiences, pointing to difficulty in grasping and identifying important populations. On the other hand, CICERO was highly successful in addressing the challenges in audience targeting as the project involved a target group analysis that helped identify the key factors in addressing the audience, their behaviour, the conditions they live in, and the language they speak and other vital statistics.
- **Messages** - tailoring messages was one of the stronger elements of the CSEP campaigns but demonstrated slightly higher success when compared with the audience category (60% of the maximum possible score). Several communication campaigns faced challenges in this regard. For example, scorecard questions relating to messages' emotional character and having a creative team behind messaging showed that projects like OnarVla had difficulty tailoring their messages to appeal to emotional aspects via communication assets.
- **Messengers** - effectiveness of messengers was one of the highest-scoring elements (62% of the maximum possible score). The preliminary assessment demonstrates that 16 of 20 initiatives were able to involve local community organisations and CSOs as stakeholders, while 8 projects were also able to engage them in the campaign consortium. At the same time, messengers were known by the target groups to a large extent only in EU(RVIEU), YouthRightOn, PRECOBIAS, and OnarVla. Moreover, an in-depth analysis of project-level materials showed that 14 projects have not involved messengers that experienced being part of radicalised or extremist groups. The assessment showed that 55% of the projects had messengers largely known to the target audience.
- **Medium** - concerning the channels used by the projects, this category was scored as strongly successful (74% of the maximum possible score). This was due to the fact that the majority of projects used several communication channels and campaigns that included repeated exposure to the target audiences. Also, the extent to which the campaign used analytics and insights functions of social media to target specific audiences was large. At the same time, touchpoints and channels used to convey the message were clarified and justified to a moderate extent. When asked about the justification of channels used to convey the message, some projects—such as Extremely EUnited—had weak justification or clarity. Projects have not made sufficient research on what media channels their target audience consumed which may have contributed that the majority of projects were also moderately effective in terms of achieving sufficient reach through the chosen medium.
- **Call to action** - this was the lowest-scored element in comparison with other elements, but it was still a moderately successful element (49% of the maximum possible score). Scorecard questions concerning the emotional appeal of a call to action, the integration of a behavioural change model and the presence of follow-up

activities also indicated greater difficulty across most projects, e.g. including EUROTOPIA and OPEN. This may also be demonstrative of a more general struggle with the execution element of project strategies.

- **Monitoring and evaluation** – desk research showed that this was one of the highest-scored elements at this stage of analysis (71% of the maximum possible score). Scorecard questions on the evaluation of success and monitoring of message performance throughout the campaign lifecycle demonstrated that most campaigns had monitoring and evaluation structures in place, but some - like OPEN and CONCORD - still lacked these systems. The in-depth qualitative observations made suggest that even with a monitoring and evaluation system in place, the internal assessments in most cases did not go beyond technical KPIs and, for example, did not assess the effects of change in behaviours.

The following section on effectiveness is structured into sub-sections which seek to present further the preliminary assessment of the effectiveness of the CSEP-funded projects in terms of reaching CSEP objectives and project goals; the effectiveness of the project composition, design and approaches; project messages and communication channels.

Besides the top-level findings, the scorecard analysis also looked at the possible patterns and comparisons between different projects and categories to detect any patterns of success. Firstly, the analysis looked into the main characteristics of the top three and the bottom project funded. This comparison was further used in the identification of the best practices. Secondly, the comparison of the 2017 and 2018 funded projects took place. This was done in the logic of identifying if any progress has been made between the two funding periods.

Comparison of the most and least successful projects.

The overall effectiveness of each project was calculated based on the maximum total score that can be reached. According to the preliminary scorecard analysis, 16 out of the 20 projects scored more than 50% in overall effectiveness. To further explore what made a project successful, we compared the shared characteristics of the most successful and the least successful projects.

Among the most successful projects Oltre l'orizzonte, YouthRightOn and D.O.B.T. were the top three with high scores in most of the categories. The aforementioned projects were at least 68% effective in determining and communicating the goal, targeting audience, tailoring messages, choosing the appropriate channels and monitoring and evaluating the outcomes.

The first thing these projects have in common is a clear explanation of the goals of measurable actions as well as an outline of the relationship between specific actions and the desired outcomes. Oltre l'orizzonte campaign's goal was to address the second-generation Muslim youth's need to feel accepted and integrated within their community by directly targeting young people in vulnerable states and giving them a voice. YouthRightOn campaign aimed to enhance youth's awareness and critical thinking around extremist propaganda and promote empowerment and autonomy, Similarly, D.O.B.T. campaign's goal was to help youth identify and fight extremism and disinformation.

Another effective element of the top three most successful projects was having a clear perspective on the target audience's behaviour and the conditions they live in. Oltre l'orizzonte targeted second-generation Muslim youth in urban areas of Italy whereas YouthRightOn and D.O.B.T. targeted general youth from different countries.

The approach that Oltre l'orizzonte took was based on the co-design of the campaign rather than one-way direct interaction. The engagement of the primary and secondary target groups in the participatory processes was used to co-design the online communication campaign, shifting the role from being "users" to "prosumers" of content focussing on issues, practices and messages that are tailor-made and not mass-produced,

deconstructing stereotypes and misrepresentations of Islam and its followers. The engagement of stakeholders was also well-thought and executed and was based on: "identifying and engaging external expert Subjects, with expertise in the relevant fields of on- and off-line social communication, social-impact web marketing, first-line education (for anti-radicalisation and empowerment of youth), conflict prevention, social inclusion."

The communication campaign was launched with the preparation of brochures and posters for offline dissemination activities. These materials presented the project activities to be carried out with the direct engagement of the interested young people and provided a perspective for further involvement and participation. The campaign pursued the objective of reaching high numbers of relevant users (campaign reach). In order to narrow the scope of the campaign and reach objectives, Oltre l'orizzonte conducted an in-depth study of the target audience via desk research as well as qualitative in-depth interviews involving 42 second-generation youths in Italy to understand the complexity of the audience in terms of living conditions, type of education, religion, family ties and their view on important topics related to radicalisation. Overall, 15 dimensions were examined to construct the target audience profile. Although Italian was the primary working language, all contents co-developed by the addressed target groups were also provided in other usable languages such as Arabic, Urdu, Pashtun, and Turkish.

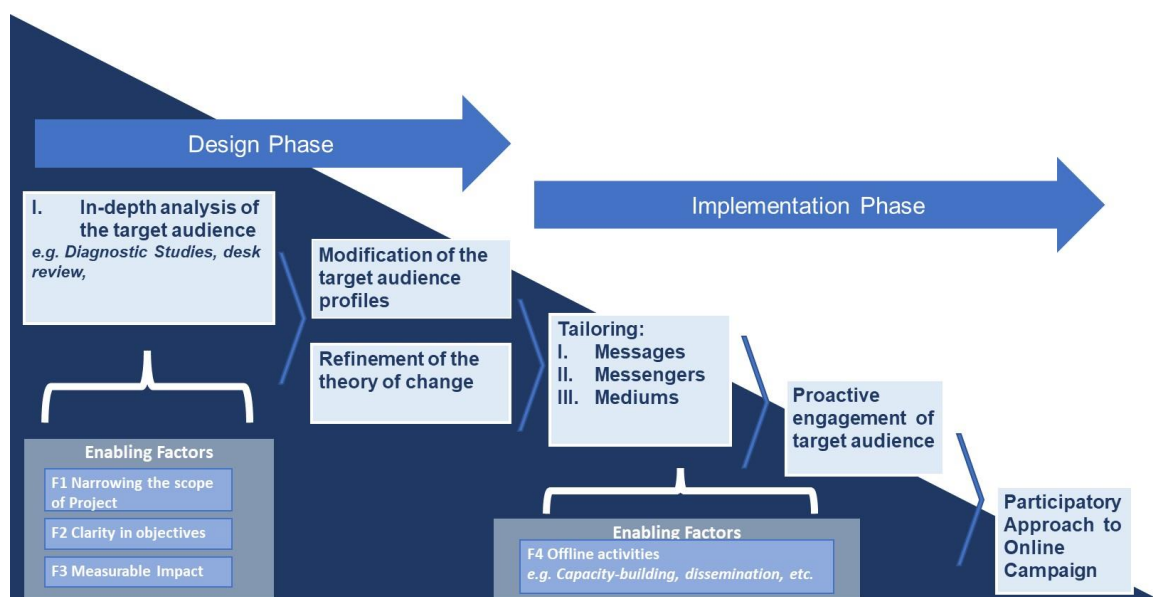
In project YouthRightOn, results from the desk research, as well as the in-depth descriptive and statistical analysis of data from the national survey, a diagnostic report was used to define potential target groups and the specific factors (demographic, social, behavioural) associated with their vulnerability towards embracing certain far-right messages and online content. The team performed regression and factor analysis on the survey data and identified two target sub-groups ("passive endorsers" and "activists/violence supporters"), which were decisive for the direction of the entire campaign. The report further provided valuable insights into the target groups' online behaviour patterns, civic engagement readiness, and sources of influence around critical social issues, among other factors and characteristics that helped shape the communication strategy and messages.

The diagnostic phase contributed to the appropriate specification of the theory of change and for the campaign to be tailored per the target audience's location, age, online behaviour/preferences and other key characteristics.

In project D.O.B.T significant research was carried out to determine the values, motivations, attitudes and behaviours of the target audience. While the extensive report did not state the "information gaps" of the target audience, they did underline the key aspects and contexts of youth in each of the target audiences. The one CSO involved in the project was directly in charge of developing this report on the characteristics of the target audience, thus providing direct and often local knowledge into the research. Interviews with this organisation found that the research they produced was shared with the rest of the consortium, which served as a point of departure for the whole project.

As illustrated in the figure below the successful projects followed the following approach of narrowing down the target audience, studying them directly and refining the campaign and theory of change to reach the project objectives. This was all supported by the copying offline dissemination or capacity-building actions.

Figure 34 - Successful model of target audience engagement



Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

The campaigns' messages were designed by a professional communications specialist and included rational and emotional elements to large extents. A sufficient number of targets were reached through the mediums chosen for all three campaigns.

All three campaigns monitored and evaluated throughout the campaign lifecycle and had a clear idea of how the results would be measured. Oltre l'orizzonte campaign's message involved demonstrating the potential for integration and demystifying the life and the heroism propagated by radicalism. YouthRightOn campaign's message covered issues such as the consequences of violence, empathy, critical thinking, non-violent conflict resolution, how to recognise and react to fakes, manipulation and propaganda online, finding and giving help and support when one is on the wrong path, finding one's voice and engaging with others constructively.

On the contrary, EUROTOPIA, OPEN and COMMIT campaigns were on the lower end of the spectrum with overall effectiveness of less than 50%. These projects were the least successful, particularly in the call-to-action element, with an average of less than 23% effectiveness.

These three projects were also scored the lowest ones in terms of the goal element suggesting that they are the least successful in communicating the goal. EUROTOPIA campaign's goals include creating behaviour changes through enhanced critical thinking and awareness regarding the triggers of joining right-wing extremist groups as well as the difficulties of leaving said groups. The OPEN campaign intended to contribute to fighting the phenomenon of Islamic radicalisation. COMMIT campaign aimed to discourage groups and individuals at risk of being radicalised and affected by extremist content from taking part in such movements by supporting their resilience and critical thinking skills.

EUROTOPIA and OPEN campaigns were also low in effectiveness in targeting the audience, with less than 40% success. EUROTOPIA targeted young people vulnerable to radicalisation in Sweden, Italy and Belgium, while OPEN targeted Muslim youth in Rome, Nice, Strasbourg, Stockholm and Elche. Both campaigns were weak in terms of clarifying how the chosen actions of the campaign would be relevant to the target audience, which might have a role in their overall weakness in the audience element.

Comparison of the 2017 and 2018 projects

The top three most successful projects had received their grants in 2017. The top 10 most successful projects included 7 projects with 2017 funding and only 3 projects with 2018 funding. To explore possible common trends amongst projects that received funding in 2017 vs. 2018, we sorted projects based on the year they received their grants and calculated their average success on each element. Out of the 20 projects, 12 of them had received funding in 2017 while the remaining 8 had received funding in 2018. When the overall average scores of different elements are compared based on the year funding were received, it can be concluded that the projects with 2017 grants were more effective as they scored higher for almost all elements. The difference is specifically more emphasized in the goals element with 2017-funded projects having an average score of 8.4 out of a maximum of 13 points whereas 2018-funded projects have an average score of 6.4. The majority of the projects with 2017 grants had a theory of change (8 out of 12) while only 2 of the 2018-funded projects had a theory of change (RAGE and GAMER).

Audience targeting was another element that was more effectively addressed by projects that were funded in 2017 although CICERO and PRECOBIAS campaigns that were funded in 2018 were also effective in targeting. Between 2018 funded projects only CICERO had a clear perspective on the living conditions of the target audience as demographic research was conducted about the target audience which is people at risk of Islamist, far right/left or single-issue radicalisation. Another difference in audience targeting between 2017 and 2018 funded projects was audience segmenting. 75% of the 2018 funded projects segmented their audience compared to only 33% of those that were funded in 2017. Between 2018 funded projects which segmented the audience, CICERO used the same message for all segments of the audience whereas some others such as DECOUNT and (Re)think used different activities for different target groups.

Justification of the Scores for CSEP-funded projects

To ensure transparency in the scoring, the section below presents the justification of the scores assigned to projects. The justification follows the careful examination of where the project has scored high and low and then looking back at the full scorecard assessment including the qualitative explanation to see why the project was scored that way.

Table 14 - Overview table of project scoring justifications

Project name	Score (out of 67 points)	Summary justification
Oltre l'orizzonte	51.75	Project "Oltre l'orizzonte" was assessed as the highest-scoring project together with "YouthRightOn". This is in particular due to reaching high scores in elements of goals, audience, messenger and M&E but in a particular medium. Already during the design stage, the project has a detailed and measurable theory of change. The project has clearly explained the goals of the action and the connection between different activities planned. The project responded to all the objectives of the CSEP programme to a large extent. The project had a clear idea based on the research and direct research with the target audience on why they would engage in the campaign's actions. The campaign had a clear idea of touchpoints with the "message sender". The project managed to identify the social demographic background of the target audience and used it to tailor the messages, messengers and communication channels. The segmentation of the target audience improves the project's ability to reach the intended objectives. The assessment also found that the project has used messenger - a person who turned away radicalisation in the past which increased the credibility of the campaign. The project also succeeded in choosing the right medium and tailoring the message to the target group. The monitoring and evaluation plan was drafted in the early stage of the campaign but was adapted and tailored to the project throughout its development of the project.
YouthRightOn	51.75	Project "YouthRightOn" was assessed as the highest scoring project together with "Oltre l'orizzonte". This is in particular due to reaching high scores in elements of goals, audience, messages but in particular medium and M&E. The project had one significant point of success which was the extensive research before the start of the project based on a representative survey and focus groups which allowed to define the target audience and messages. This meant that the campaigns could be directly tailored according to the needs of the target groups. The impacts of the campaign were then also evaluated using an online interactive survey. Despite these high scores the project scored slightly less on the elements of messenger and call to action. The risks associated with the messengers used to convey the message were found to not have been sufficiently analysed by the project team. Additionally, there appeared to be a lack in the presentation of a clear and justified behavioural change model. Nevertheless, the project team showed a great understanding about what elements are important for a successful project.
D.O.B.T.	47.25	Project "Do One Brave Thing" was assessed as one of the top three highest scoring projects, scoring at least 68% effective in each of the elements of the GAMMMA + model. Particular strengths were seen in the elements of goal, audience, medium and call to action. An interesting point of success in the project was in the important linkages between the online and offline campaigns. In particular, the direct involvement of youth (the target audience) in the design of the campaigns meant that the campaigns could be directly tailored according to the needs from the target groups. Despite this, DOBT scored comparatively less on the aspects of messenger and medium. This was found to be the case due to the campaign not having a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the media

Project name	Score (out of 67 points)	Summary justification
		format(s) used to deliver the message. The touchpoints and channels used to convey the message were also found to not have been sufficiently clarified or justified by the project team. While the project scored highly on the monitoring and evaluation element, it is worthy to note that there was a lack of a systematic approach to the use of the GAMMMA+ model in their evaluation as initially foreseen at the time of the proposal. This thus hindered the degree to which the evaluation elements could bring about value insights on behavioural change.
PRECOBIAS	46.5	The project "PRECOBIAS" was assessed as being above average overall. First and foremost, this was due to the project goals' correspondence to the objectives of the CSEP programme, and the elements of the GAMMMA+ model relating to goal, message and medium. In relation to the latter, one of the campaign's strengths was that it involved communication experts. Furthermore, the campaign was based on thorough research about cognitive biases and how to work with these, which supported a clear message. The monitoring of the campaign was conducted in a systematic manner and used formatively, and the final evaluation rested on a relevant design aiming to measure outcome on an individual level and among young people sensitive to radical propaganda. The lack of a theory of change is the reason the project was not assessed higher.
Project Grey	45.25	"Project Grey" scored generally well across each of the elements of the GAMMMA+, with notable achievements in the elements of message, medium and monitoring and evaluation. One of the successes of the message of Project Grey was that it used a message which had been developed and successfully used in a previous campaign. In addition, testing of different types of content was conducted before the start of the campaign, including the target groups' assessment of the appropriateness of message and messenger which made for a more tailored approach. The project also had a good understanding of the use and scope of social media, with the involvement of a tech organisation to conduct big data analytics which enabled the message to be constantly tailored to emerging online trends and discourse. Where the project scored comparatively less was in the elements of audience and call to action. While behavioural assessments were made as part of the monitoring and evaluation, they were not sufficiently linked to the call to action. Similarly, the campaign did not explore the hidden needs of the target audience as part of the audience diagnosis.
Breaking the ISIS Brand Narrative	44.5	The project "Breaking the ISIS Brand" was assessed as being above average overall. The main strengths of the project were the elements related to the medium, messenger and M&E. This was firstly due to the use of Facebook ads stemming from their partnership with Facebook that was established during previous projects. This allowed them to better reach the relevant target audience. Secondly, the messengers in the campaigns were people who have formerly been part of ISIS and website contents were signed by a Sheik who was part of the project team. This increased the credibility of the messages. Lastly, the project team had a clear and extensive monitoring and evaluation strategy that allowed them to react and adjust campaigns as appropriate. The weaknesses of the project were related to the elements of messages and call to action. The

Project name	Score (out of 67 points)	Summary justification
		<p>project team did not compose a strategy document and the relevance and research behind the messages was not clearly explained or justified. This might stem from the fact that the team used materials produced before the project and thought they did not need to be explained. Additionally, no local organisation was involved in the design of the campaign. Furthermore, the behaviour change model was not very well defined or structured, and the project documents were not fully clear what behaviours they were trying to trigger besides turning away from ISIS.</p>
Action plan for Portugal	43.25	<p>Project "RESET" was found to broadly score above/ on average across all of the categories of the GAMMMA+ model, with particular strengths with regards to the criteria of call to action and audience. This was found to be mainly due to the strong knowledge of the consortium with regards to the local context and target audience and characteristics, which were thoroughly researched at the project's inception. This also had an impact on the campaign messages which were also found to score above average. Where the project was scored lower was on the criteria of goals and messenger. With regards to the goals, no explicit mention or incorporation of the main elements of the theory of change model were incorporated in the design of the project goals or campaigns. For the criteria of messenger, the project did not adequately explain the choice of messenger and its relevance to the target audience. This may be one of the factors which led to a low engagement rate with the target audience, however this cannot be evidenced as the determining factor.</p>
RAGE	42.99	<p>Project RAGE scored above/on average based on the categories of the GAMMMA+ model with more strong scoring in terms of audience and call to action. Project RAGE employed a particular design for its actions, with two campaigns (online social campaign and social city games) that focused on empowering young people and NGOs in implementing campaigns. The low scoring on the 'messages' aspect of the project was determined by the particular complex nature of this project that had a multitude of messages which were further disseminated by NGOs and through social campaigns that were implemented by the messengers of this project. Therefore, the lowering scoring resulted due to the amount of messages and need for more granular data at the level of each campaign that was implemented.</p>
DECOUNT	42.75	<p>Project DECOUNT scored above/on average based on the categories of the GAMMMA+ model with more strong scoring in terms of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Medium. In the case of the medium, there is a strong justification of the medium chosen as part of the dissemination efforts of the campaign which contributes to the high score of this element. Moreover, consultation with the target audience, as part of the design of the campaign, contributed to the relevance of the mediums employed to disseminate the message. Moreover, the inclusion of known personalities to the target audience (i.e. Let's Players) who acted as medium to disseminate the message is also an example of a good practice. In terms of M&E, the DECOUNT project proposes and puts in place an adequate system to monitor and evaluate the performance of the</p>

Project name	Score (out of 67 points)	Summary justification
		<p>outputs and ultimately the success of the campaign. This includes a quantitative evaluation, a qualitative evaluation and a formative evaluation of the project. The project scores low in the Call to Action component, as the project documents reviewed do not clearly formulate a call to action which is be clearly communicated, simple, doable and meaningful as per the GAMMMA + criteria.</p>
RVIEU (EU)	42.5	<p>The Resonant Voices Initiative in the EU (RVIEU) project scored above/on average based on the categories of the GAMMMA+ model with higher scoring in terms of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Messenger. Its main objective is to strengthen the influence of credible and resonant voices challenging extremist propaganda targeted at audiences vulnerable to radicalisation and recruitment within the Western Balkans diaspora in the EU. By involving the representatives of the target audience in the design of the project, the campaign not only aims at reaching the target audience through credible and relatable messengers but also supports the overall relevance of the campaign. The design and emphasis on the M&E component of the campaign contributes to the high score of the project in this regard. Besides the regular M&E meetings between the consortium partners where the performance of the outputs produces was continuously monitored, a campaign impact evaluation as well as an external evaluation was conducted which helped to assess the success of the different communication activities carried out. The project scores low in Medium and Call to Action. In relation to medium, this may be due to the fact that, as pointed out by the project members, there is not much data available on the media consumption patterns of the target audience, which makes it difficult to pinpoint which are the most effective mediums to disseminate the campaign. While the Call to action of the “Propelling Campaigns for Impact” is clearly spelled out, it remains unclear how does this fit into the overall project.</p>
ONarVla	42	<p>Online Positive Narratives for the Prevention of Radicalisation within Flemish Education (ONarVla) scored on average in the scorecard assessment. Project ONarVla targeted a very wide audience young people (14-18 years old) in Flanders via activities with teachers, influencers and school management. The project scored relatively high for the mediums used (4.25 out of 5), as there were many suitable mediums used to maximise the reach with the audience. Project partners subcontracted a digital communications company in the first year, which made them change the project’s strategy and theory of change from what was initially applied with.</p>
CICERO	40	<p>Project CICERO scored on average. The project’s main strength was that it promoted tolerance and EU/democratic fundamental rights and values to a broad audience of young people. The scorecard showed that the project got average score across all GAMMMA+ model criteria. The items for which the project scored high were audience, messenger and M&E. The audience criteria was scored highest due to the fact that the project managed to understand the target audience on a conceptual level. When it comes to the messenger and touchpoints with the target audience, the project engaged community members as a messenger in Belgium.</p>

Project name	Score (out of 67 points)	Summary justification
GAMER	39.5	Project GAMER scored on average in the scorecard assessment primarily based on the distinct approach to communication. The project's main strength relied on the development of an education entertainment gaming tool that aims at sending subtle messaging to its players. Moreover, their understanding of the target audience and behaviour change was really detailed. GAMER was not a communication campaign similar to the other CSEP-funded projects, therefore its scoring on the 'messenger' aspect was very low. The project had two dimensions: it had the game itself as a messenger, as well as the 'Active Bystanders' who were discussing with gamers online. The 'call to action' aspect scored lower primarily because the project did not have a traditional call to action similar to the other projects. The gaming tool was not fully developed and finalised due to the difficulties to do so in the timeframe of the project.
Counteract	39.5	Project COUNTERACT scored on average in the scorecard assessment primarily based on the 'messages' component of the GAMMMA+ model criteria. The message of the project was clearly formulated and told in the first person and in their mother-tongue, so that not only the message would reach other people within their communities but also others in their home countries in addition to being subtitled in four other languages spoken by other migrants in Portugal and Spain. Moreover, the message was tested in a informal workshop with young migrants and refugees, but also with young Portuguese, to gather their perceptions on the campaign before and after going public which also enabled the identification of risks. Moreover, the formulation of the messages was co-designed together with communications/creative/marketing specialists.
Extremely EUnited	39	Project Extremely EUnited scored on average. The project's main strength was that it promoted tolerance and EU/democratic fundamental rights and values to a broad audience of young people. The project scored below average on the criteria in the GAMMMA+ model relating to audience. Thus, from the start the project did not have deep insight into the characteristics and living conditions of the target audience of young people sensitive to radical propaganda. This was to some degree developed during the campaign.
(Re)think	37.25	Project CONCORD was found to broadly score on average across all of the categories of the GAMMMA+ model. Where the project scored less was goals and audience. The project was implemented without the theory of change and therefore even though the actions were realistic and measurable they were lacking the overarching logic. The project had a somewhat clear understanding of the target audience as well. It managed to identify why the target audience will engage in the campaign's action, or select the touchpoints. However, the project did not identify the clear needs of the target audience. This also influenced the way the target audience was approached with the messages and medium. Implemented campaign did not identify the drivers of radicalisation behaviours interlinked with the target audience. The campaign did not conduct the initial consultation with the target audience (s) to develop the message and the message was not tested with the target audience before including it

Project name	Score (out of 67 points)	Summary justification
		in the campaign's assets. Chosen messenger was known to the target audience to a limited extent.
CONCORD	34	Project CONCORD was found to broadly score on average across all of the categories of the GAMMMA+ model, scoring above average with regards to the criteria of goals and M&E. The above average scorings in the two criteria were found to mainly be due to the strong alignment of the project objectives with those of the CSEP programme, the quantitative and qualitative KPIs that were established and the monthly monitoring reports that were produced. Where the project was scored lower was on the criteria of audience and call to action. With regards to the audience, the project did not provide sufficient evidence on defining and analysing the needs of the target audience, nor was there a clear understanding of why the target audience would engage in the campaign. For the criteria of call to action, the targeted behaviour triggers were not sufficiently activated and it was unclear whether the targeted behaviours were monitored during the project.
OPEN	30.25	Project OPEN had a low score based on the criteria of the GAMMMA+ model assessed through the scorecard. The project was implemented without a theory of change and without a consistent coherence between different actions planned. Moreover, the campaign did not set realistic goals of the action. Although the project objectives were generally aligned with the CSEP objectives, this was due to the vagueness and general formulation of the project objectives. In relation to the target audience, while there were significant efforts placed to define the profiles of the target audience, this was not used to tailor the message that would bring about the ambitious change aimed by the project. The campaign gained a moderately sufficient reach through the chosen medium. Even though the messages created had a call-to-action element, it was not evident that the campaign sufficiently activated its target audience.
EUROTOPIA	27.75	The project EUROTOPIA scored the second lowest of the 20 projects and was found to broadly score low across most of the categories of the GAMMMA+ model, scoring average only for message, messenger and medium. The project scored the lowest for call to action, which was mainly due to lack of evidence of the targeted behaviours, and for audience, which was mainly due to lack of target audience analysis and the relevance of the campaign for the target audience. Moreover, the project was implemented without a theory of change and without a clear relationship between specific actions put in place and the desired outcomes, and no monitoring or evaluation was conducted throughout the campaign lifecycle. While the messages were generally well-structured using different messengers for different segments of the target audience, no initial consultation with the target audience was conducted to develop the

Project name	Score (out of 67 points)	Summary justification
		messages and they were not tested with the audience before including in the campaign's assets.
COMMIT	26.5	Project COMMIT had the lowest score based on the GAMMMA+ model criteria. The project was implemented without a theory of change and the campaign did not set out realistic goals of the action. This again affected the overall outcome of the project and the synergy between the activities. The project scored very high on the audience element of the GAMMMA+ model. The research activities contributed to constructing a good conceptual understanding of the target group. However, this was not used to tailor the messages or choose the medium that would guarantee the intended reach through the online campaign. The campaign did not foresee the "backfire effect" of the message and operated without a clear messenger. It did not involve local community organisations as a member of the campaign consortium. When it comes to the medium used, the assessment show that the touchpoints and channels used to convey the message were not sufficiently clarified and justified.

Appendix 5. Interview Analysis

As part of this study, 84 interviews were conducted with 67 interviewees on the project-level and 17 interviews on the EU level with 3 interviewees being interviewed twice, first during exploratory interviews and later during in-depth interviews. It should be noted that from this group, 7 interviews were conducted as part of exploratory interviews in the inception stage of the study. The in-depth interviews with stakeholders aimed to focus on explaining, qualifying and complementing the data gathered through the desk research. In particular, the interviews were used to fill any gaps coming from the desk research of the shared project documentation and to identify specific challenges and lessons learnt.

Overall, the evidence collected from the in-depth interviews cover all evaluation criteria besides effectiveness (which is covered in the scorecard analysis presented in Appendix 6) and the majority of the evaluation questions. Meanwhile the answers should be read as 'judge and party' opinion requiring further triangulation with inputs from the desk research and analysis of the effectiveness of projects. The table below provides an overview of interviews conducted per stakeholder category.

Table 15. Number of stakeholders interviewed by stakeholder group and organisation

Stakeholder group	Stakeholder type	No. of exploratory interviews	No. of in-depth interviews
EU-level <i>Other include academics, researcher or experts in the field of PCVE</i>	European Commission (DG HOME)	3	1
	RAN	1	2
	ESCN	1	2
	Other	2	5
Project-level <i>Including coordinators, campaign designers, M&E experts, partners</i>	Counter narrative Campaign for prEventing RadicalisatiOn (CICERO)	-	5
	Preventing and combating online radicalisation (Counteract)	-	2
	Do one brave thing (D.O.B.T.)	-	4
	Promoting democracy and fighting extremism through an online counter-narratives and alternative narratives campaign (DECOUNT)	-	3
	EUROTOPIA	-	1
	Oltre l'orizzonte. Contro narrazioni dai margini al centro	-	3
	Project Grey: Building the Middle Ground	-	4

Stakeholder group	Stakeholder type	No. of exploratory interviews	No. of in-depth interviews
	Radical Awareness Game Engagement (RAGE)	-	2
	Preventing and countering extremism and radicalisation: an action plan for Portugal (RESET)	-	4
	(Re)think Before Act – Alternative Narratives to Violent Extremism	-	3
	Resonant Voices Initiative in the EU (RVIEU)	-	3
	Resilient Youth against Far-Right Extremist Messaging Online (YouthRightOn)	-	4
	Leveraging the pOTentialities of New media and Proactive CSOs and grass root movements to overcome Islamic radicalization oNline (open)	-	3
	Extremely EUnited: Prevent Radicalization among Youth	-	3
	COMMunication campaign against exTremism and radicalization (COMMIT)	-	4
	Breaking the ISIS Brand Counter Narrative Project	-	4
	Prevention of Youth Radicalisation Through Self-Awareness on Cognitive Biases (PRECOBIAS)	-	3
	Concord: Narrating Alternatives to Radicalisation (Concord)	-	3
	Online positieve narratieven ter preventie van radicalisering in het Vlaamse onderwijs./ Online positive narratives for the prevention of radicalisation within Flemish education (ONarVla)	-	4

Stakeholder group	Stakeholder type	No. of exploratory interviews	No. of in-depth interviews
	Generating Awareness to Mitigate Extremism and Radicalisation (GAMER)	-	5
Total		7	77

Given the breadth of the CSEP programme and the evaluated projects, the respective knowledge of each interviewee differs across each of the questions that were asked per evaluation criterion. To ensure that the most relevant topics were covered in sufficient depth, specific interview guides were developed per stakeholder category, as well as per type of project team member. As a result, not all questions/ evaluation criteria were answered by all interviewees.

The data gathered through the interviews was summarised in individual interview reports after each interview. These were clearly labelled, and their structure was based on a template following the same format. The data collected was then coded and analysed using the QDA software, NVivo®. This means that the individual utterances of interviewees were assigned to the evaluation questions and categorised into themes that provided insights into the evaluation questions. This enabled the study team to give detailed answers to each evaluation question for which the interviews provided evidence and to report according to stakeholder groups. The following analysis provides answers to each evaluation question (besides those related to effectiveness).

Relevance

EQ 1. Did the objectives of individual communication actions correspond to the objectives of the CSEP programme?

When it comes to the objectives of the CSEP programme, they were found relevant at the time of the call by 20 project level and two EU level interviewees, with a further six project level and one EU level interviewee believing that they have continued relevance.

Five EU and eight project-level interviewees were of the view that the objectives were too ambitious, according to four interviewees this primarily related to the specific objective to bring about behaviour change by dissuading the target audience from promoting terrorism and violent extremism and/or using violence. Six project-level interviewees stated that their projects focused rather on changing the mindset or attitudes of the target audiences or on raising awareness in general compared to behavioural change directly. As the CSEP-funded projects ran for a short duration and were often “one-off”, eight interviewees found it challenging to see the desired impact, and three noted its measurement being problematic.

A related remark from two EU-level interviews and one project level was that CSOs may not be equipped enough to fulfil the objectives of the CSEP both in relation to the desired impacts, as well as the availability of resources. However, it was conceded that the objective on EU/democratic fundamental rights and values is more realistic compared to the objective on behaviour change.

The objectives of CSEP were also perceived to be too broad, general or unclear by ten of the interviewees. A couple of interviewees (one EU level and one project level) noted that the CSEP objectives may not be fully aligned with the work of DG HOME. This was seen with respect to the objectives of contributing to promoting tolerance and EU/democratic fundamental rights and values, which were perceived by the interviewees to be stronger

competencies of other parts of the Commission, such as in DG EMPL and DG JUST. As such, there was a view that the objectives of the CSEP should be narrowed.

Nevertheless, all of the project-level interviewees believed that their communication actions corresponded to the objectives of the CSEP programme, with ten noting that some of the objectives were more relevant than others.

EQ 2. How relevant were the individual communication activities to identified target audiences?

Project level interviewees were largely of the view that their communication activities were very relevant to their target audience, however, they conceded that the target audience they chose was often broader than a clear and identifiable target group. A more specific target would be required in some cases. One EU-level interviewee doubted whether the target audience was reached.

On the other hand, involvement of the target group in the design of the communication was observed in six cases which was largely found to have produced relevant products. To identify the relevant communication activities, five project level and one EU-level interviews mentioned that thorough research at the beginning of the project was required.

In general, four EU and two project level interview were of the view that the offline components in CSEP-funded projects were highly relevant for reaching target audiences.

Efficiency

EQ 27. Were the effects/benefits achieved at a reasonable cost?

Across the project level interviews, there was a general agreement that the benefits/ effects of the project activities were good value for money. The interviewees did not address this question in more detail.

EQ 28. Was the EU support provided via direct management/grants (calls for proposals but with the possibility to have a Consortium composed of entities from one single Member State) the most efficient means of EU support?

The Commission provided very good support during the duration of their projects under CSEP according to eight interviewees, with several praising the Commission's flexibility while some indicated a need for greater flexibility to adjust the project design and methodology after the proposal. Nevertheless, five interviewees found the bureaucratic burden of the programme to be high and three mentioned that the 80% co-financing was too low. One interviewee pointed out the differences between the Western and Eastern Europe and that different calls for them might be appropriate. This in particular applies to the 20% co-financing rule which Eastern European organisations can struggle to secure.

Six project level interviews revealed that applying for CSEP funding with the Commission had been easier than applying for other funding internationally or nationally. Nevertheless, two EU and one project-level interviewee stated that the choice of the most efficient form of support depends on the country in question.

Three of project-level interviewees appreciated being able to apply as a single country project. In the future, the possibility to apply individually and not as part of the consortium was considered a positive change to be made by two project-level interviewees. Furthermore, two EU level interviewees noted that too many projects were funded and advised for future to fund less projects for a longer term.

EQ 29. To what extent are the costs proportionate to the benefits?

The ten project-level interviewees that answered the question were of the view that the costs were proportionate to the benefits. Having provided good value for money was mentioned by further three project-level interviewees.

EQ 30. Which factors influenced the efficiency of the observed results?

Several factors that challenged the efficiency were raised, predominantly from project-level interviews. These included:

- The most common challenge raised by 28 project-level interviews was the **COVID-19** pandemic and related restrictions. Besides having to move in-person activities to an online environment, which was perceived as having an impact on the effectiveness of the activities, the pandemic also required the project teams to make resource adjustments which were reflected in the budgeting. Nevertheless, some found that it also provided an opportunity either as the activities were planned predominantly online, or that it allowed them to reach more people across countries or in more remote places within a country.
- The second most common challenge was related to the **partners**. 18 project-level interviews experienced challenges in cooperating with partners. As a general finding, several projects noted the challenge of having too many partners in the consortium which sometimes led to differing views on proceedings or more frequent staff turnover. One of the interviewees mentioned that smaller partners found EU-level projects challenging to be a part of. Problems associated with partners not delivering as promised was noted by one project-level interviewee.
- **Facebook regulations** were another common challenge encountered by 12 project-level interviewees. The efficiency of their projects was hindered by delays resulting from their products being taken down by Facebook. One project mentioned GDPR as an additional challenge.
- Another challenge that was mentioned by eight project-level interviewees was the current **political and social climate** with respect to anti-radicalisation topics becoming increasingly polarised towards the poles of political leanings, and where NGOs/ CSOs cannot be considered by specific social groups to be trusted in general.

EQ 31. How may efficiency be improved for similar future campaigns?

Limited evidence was uncovered in relation to this question. According to one EU level and four project-level interviews, the efficiency of future projects could be improved with clear routes for sustained funding leading to lower costs on average and a lower bureaucratic burden.

EQ 32. Which were the most efficient channels of communication according to the identified target group(s)?

Limited evidence was uncovered in relation to this question. However, three project-level interviewees found offline activities to be more efficient in achieving their project-level objectives.

Coherence

EQ 33. Did the various communication activities chosen in the individual projects (paid media campaigns, events, stakeholders' engagement) work well together?

14 project level interviewees were largely of the view that their various communication activities worked well together, were complementary and interconnected. In particular, it was noted by 10 of them that having both online and offline activities worked best. This is because the offline activities were seen as crucial for impact, to establish connection with the target audience and to reinforce engagement.

EQ 34. How did coherence and synergies with other projects in the same target region or country unfold?

Across project level interviewees, limited coherence and/or synergies were identified between CSEP projects in other regions. Only two interviewees mentioned that there were other projects in the country which they believed to be complementary to theirs. However, no overlap on the programme or project level was identified. Three EU-level interviewees stated that there was no comparable programme to CSEP and additional six project level interviews outlined that there were no similar projects or even funding opportunities available in the area/country. While noting that they were aware of other similar projects in the area/country, two project-level interviewees were unsure about possible synergies or overlaps.

More cooperation between the Commission and the Member States with their national action plans would increase the coherence of CSEP going forward according to one EU-level interviewee. However, two stated that this would depend on the country as it could be hindered by the lack of alignment between the EU and the country's values. Furthermore, it was raised that the Commission could aim for more coherence with regard to other policy areas and instruments which target hate speech and disinformation. As these topics are intertwined in P/CVE work, greater coherence could be provided.

EU added value

EQ 35. What is the added value resulting from individual projects' communication activities implemented at the EU level?

The EU added value of the projects was perceived by 10 project-level interviewees to be in their implementation, as several interviewees mentioned that no such funding is available at the national/regional level, either due to the authorities believing there is no need/mandate to provide such funding, or because their national authorities are overly cautious given the sensitivity of the topic area.

When it comes to the added value of the programme overall, two EU and five project level interviews pointed to the sharing of knowledge between and capacity building of the numerous project teams as being crucial results stemming from the activities being implemented at the EU level as otherwise, they would not have had the opportunity to engage with organisation in the same field across Europe.

EQ 36. Could the individual projects' communication actions be more successful if implemented uniquely at the national level?

Three cases in favour of national rather than international level of action were given. Namely, there are national differences between countries and therefore, the implementation could have been more successful nationally.

Nevertheless, the opinion on the international dimension of the project was overall positive by both EU and project-level interviewees. Overall, 17 interviewees appreciated that the CSEP facilitated the sharing of expertise, the connection of organisations that would not have worked together otherwise, and four even expressed that they would have desired increased opportunities for networking and forming synergies with the other organisations participating in CSEP.

EQ 37. Which members of the consortia attended the CSEP training workshops organised within the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (funded by the EC)?

A majority of the members of the projects noted that they attended one or more events organised by the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). 21 found them to be very useful specifically mentioning the networking and sharing of knowledge facilitated by them. Only one of the interviewees noted the online execution of the events to be a positive aspect while most noted that they would have appreciated more networking, which is more possible

at in-person events. Additionally, four project-level interviews noted that they had implemented lessons that they learned during the RAN training sessions and were of the view that more support and training could have been beneficial.

Despite mostly positive feedback from project-level interviews, three of the interviewees believed that some events lacked clarity and they did not find them very useful.

Sustainability

EQ 38. Are the effects of the individual CSEP projects likely to last after the communication actions end?

As part of the CSEP call for proposals, it lists as one of the award criteria:

“Expected results, dissemination, sustainability and long-term impact : the expected results are appropriate for the achievement of the objectives in the action; the dissemination strategy is clear, targeted and appropriate; the stream of benefits is likely to continue after the period of external support has ended; the project’s results ensure a long-term impact on the target groups and/or general public” (European Commission, CSEP 2018 Call for proposals)

Despite projects being awarded on the assumption that they would deliver “long-term impact”, 16 of the project-level interviews indicated that due to the lack of further funding, they were not able to continue with the campaign activities after the funding had finished. Given the relatively short duration of the CSEP-funded projects, interviewees were of the view that sustained impacts were not likely. One EU level interviewee supported this by saying that no sustainability can be achieved if there is no sustainable funding. Nevertheless, two interviewees noted that they were able to build relationships with the target audience during the project, thus prolonging its impacts.

EQ 39. What could be done for a more long-lasting impact?

The most common issue raised by 16 project-level interviews was the lack of funding. Several of the interviewees were of the view that further funding opportunities would have allowed for the continuation of the campaign and/or follow-ups that would lead to longer-lasting impacts. Involvement of national governments has been mentioned as a possibility by two project level and one EU level interviewee. While other two interviewees believed this possibility to be exaggerated as EU-level strategy does not necessarily equal national strategy.

Engagement and co-creation with target groups, building reputation, better dissemination and better cooperation among projects were mentioned as possible ways to improve project sustainability. Additionally, four interviewees also mentioned that involvement at schools and their curricula as an important aspect in achieving real impact; an aspect they would look to incorporate in future projects.

EQ 40. To what extent did the projects ensure the sustainability of the actions they carried out?

The sustainability of the actions was mainly perceived to be reflected in the capacity building of the project members involved and the availability, and in some cases sustained use, of the products developed. These were mentioned in 23 project-level interviews.

An additional seven interviewees noted that they had worked in this area before and continue to do so or that they started a new project, building on the one conducted through CSEP.

EQ 41. What were the most successful approaches to sustainability that can be adopted by future projects?

The most commonly mentioned factor for sustainability was expertise in PCVE with seven project-level interviewees believing that proven expertise in the area and a team of mixed expertise are very important for successful sustainable projects. Another important factor besides expertise was a presence on the ground. Six project-level interviewees noted that interaction with the target audience is necessary for sustainable results.

Furthermore, sustained sources of funding were deemed crucial, particularly in the area of communication campaigns. In addition, smaller consortia that operated with organisations they already knew were seen to increase the sustainability of the CSEP-funded projects.

Appendix 6. State of play

This chapter provides an overview of the state of play of the CSEP with respect to its legal and practical implementation.

Legal implementation of the CSEP

As described in Section 2.1, in 2015 the Commission created the EU Internet Forum (EUIF) with the aim of reducing accessibility to terrorist content online and increasing the volume of effective alternative narratives online. In June 2016, the Commission adopted the Communication supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism (COM(2016)379) which set up the Civil Society Empowerment Programme (CSEP).

In addition, on the basis of the European Agenda on Security (adopted in 2015), the European Council adopted in June 2015 the renewed European Union Internal Security Strategy 2015-2020 confirming tackling and preventing terrorism, radicalisation to terrorism and recruitment as well as financing related to terrorism, preventing and fighting serious and organised crime and preventing and fighting cybercrime as the main priorities for European Union's actions. In conformity with Regulation (EU) No 514/2014, Article 6.2, to implement the ISF Police, the Commission adopted, the 2017 and 2018 Annual Work Programmes for Union actions, which included the Call for Proposals of the CSEP for both years.

Practical Implementation of the CSEP

The second section of this chapter provides an overview of the “practical” implementation of the CSEP. This section is split in two parts, first presenting information on **phase one** of the CSEP, then presenting information corresponds to the outputs of **phase two** of the CSEP (see the intervention logic in section 2.2), presenting the geographical scope of the funded projects, the types of partnerships, target audiences, budgets, mediums and outputs.

Phase one of the CSEP: Capacity building activities for CSOs

In the first phase of CSEP, the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) organised 27 sessions of training with civil society organisations (CSOs), as well as various meetings, peer learning activities, and exchanges. The sessions centred around capacity building for CSOs, and various dimensions involved in running online campaigns tackling radicalisation and violent extremism.

Among others, the topics covered in these sessions were targeting how to create online campaigns around counter and alternative narratives, how to run a successful campaign, and how to build the message and target the right audience.

The training materials were also made available online.¹⁶⁹ Moreover, a library of resources was made available alongside the training materials, including guidebooks that provide overviews on challenges related to campaigns tackling radicalisation and violent extremism, but also tips and advice on this topic.

¹⁶⁹https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/civil-society-empowerment-programme/training-material_en

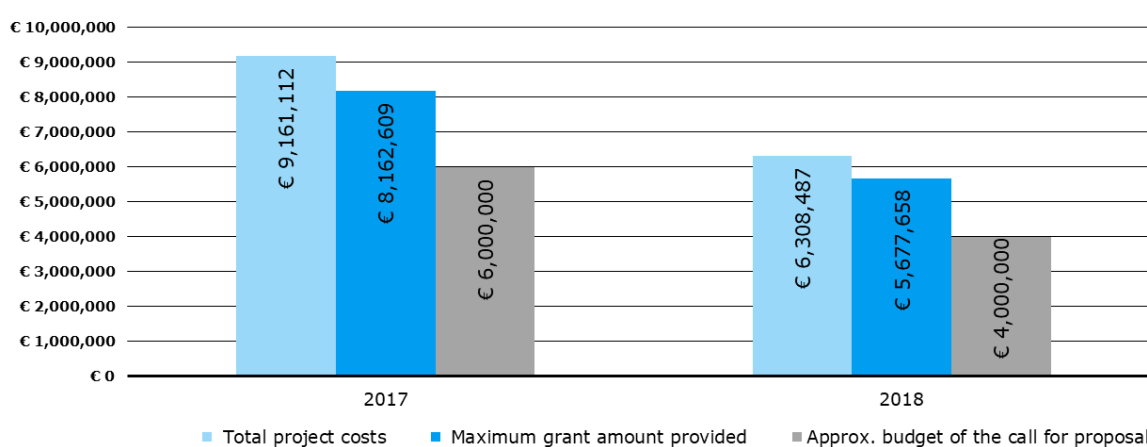
Phase two of the CSEP: Financial support to CSOs

Budget

In total, EUR 10 million was foreseen to be invested across the two calls for proposal under the CSEP. As shown in the figure below, the total amount provided across both calls was EUR 13,840,268.

The figure below presents the total project costs and the total maximum grant amount from the Commission for the 12 projects carried out under the 2017 CfP and the eight projects carried out under the 2018 CfP. Under the 2017 CfP, a total budget of EUR 6 million was earmarked for the co-financing of projects. This is compared to the 2018 CfP, which earmarked a total budget of EUR 4 million for the co-financing of projects.

Figure 35 - Overview of total project costs and maximum grant amounts

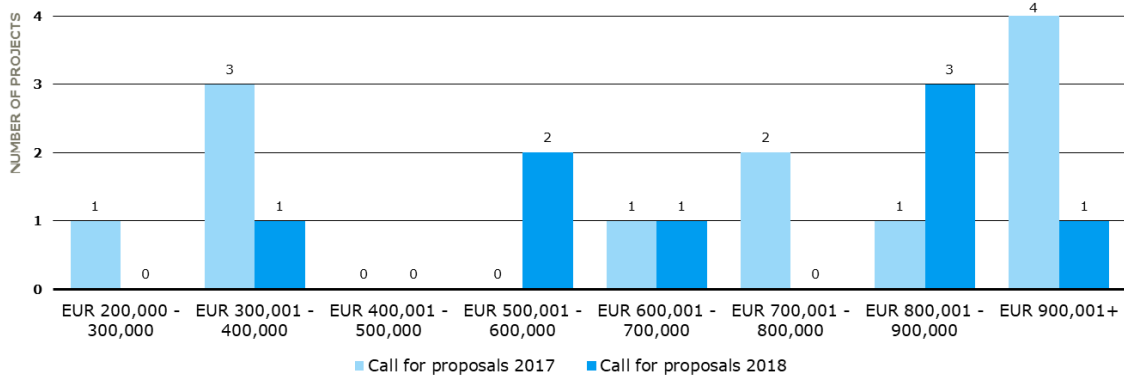


Source: Based on data from the project level deliverables that were assessed under the desk research in Task 2.

Figure 36 - Distribution in the amount of funding provided by the Commission under each call for proposal

presents the distribution of funding amounts across each of the CfPs. The average cost per project from the 2017 CfP was EUR 763,425 while projects from the 2018 CfP the average cost was EUR 788,650. The total project costs from the 2017 CfP were approximately EUR 9.16 million, with the maximum grant amount provided by the Commission being approximately EUR 8.16 million. For the projects funded under the 2018 CfP, the total project costs were EUR 6.3 million against the maximum grant amount provided by the Commission being EUR 5.67 million. The two Member States that received the most funding (in terms of the project coordinators) were Poland and Italy for projects from the 2017 CfP and the Netherlands and Belgium for projects from the 2018 CfP.

Figure 36 - Distribution in the amount of funding provided by the Commission under each call for proposal

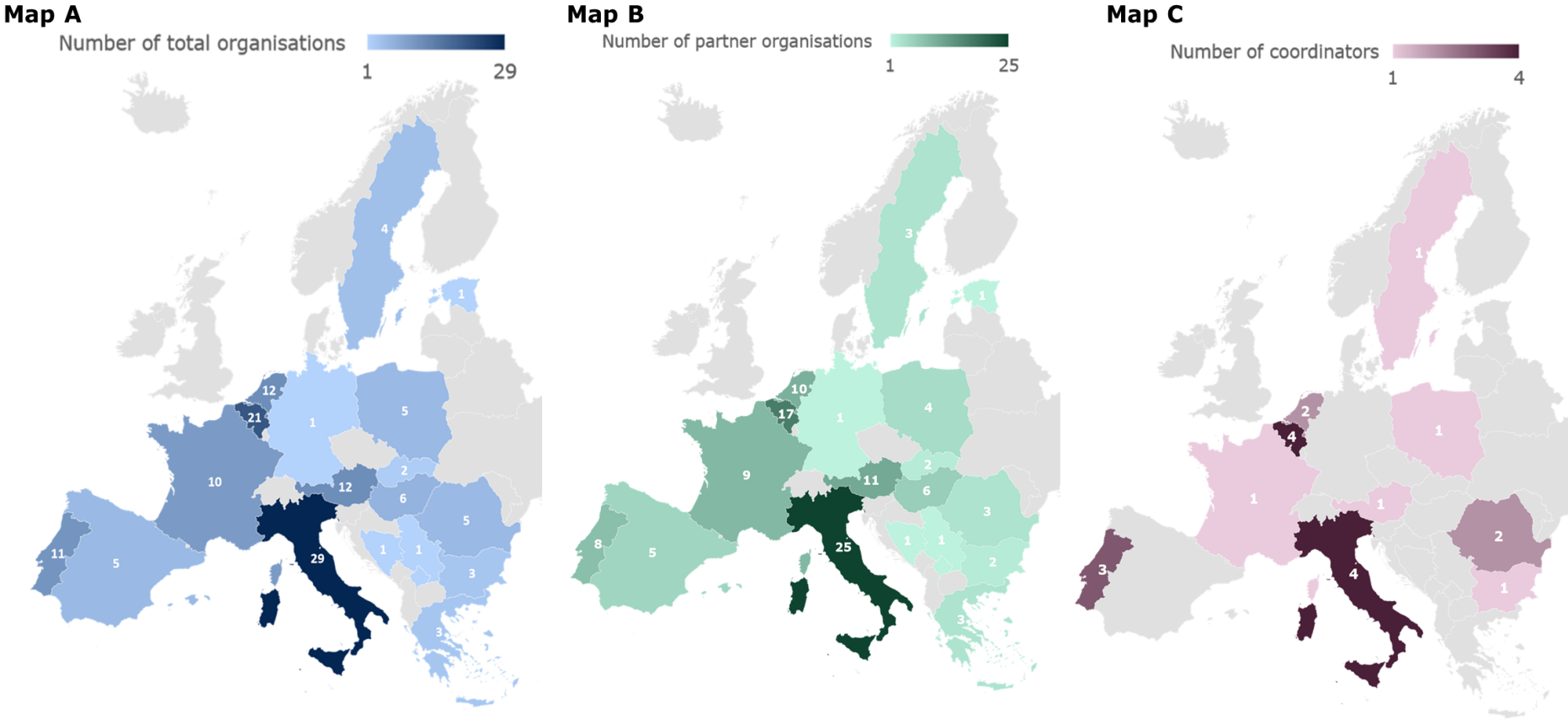


Source: Based on data from the project level deliverables that were assessed under the desk research in Task 2

Geographical scope

The figure below presents the geographical scope of the total project organisations (shown in map A), partner organisations (shown in map B) and project coordinators (shown in map C). In total, the organisations involved in the projects covered 20 countries. The highest number of organisations were based in Italy (29), followed by Belgium (21), Austria (12) the Netherlands (12), Portugal (11), France (10), Hungary (6), Spain (5), Poland (5), Romania (5), Sweden (4), Greece (3), Bulgaria (3) and Slovakia (2). One organisation was involved in the projects from each of the following countries: Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Estonia, Germany and Tunisia.

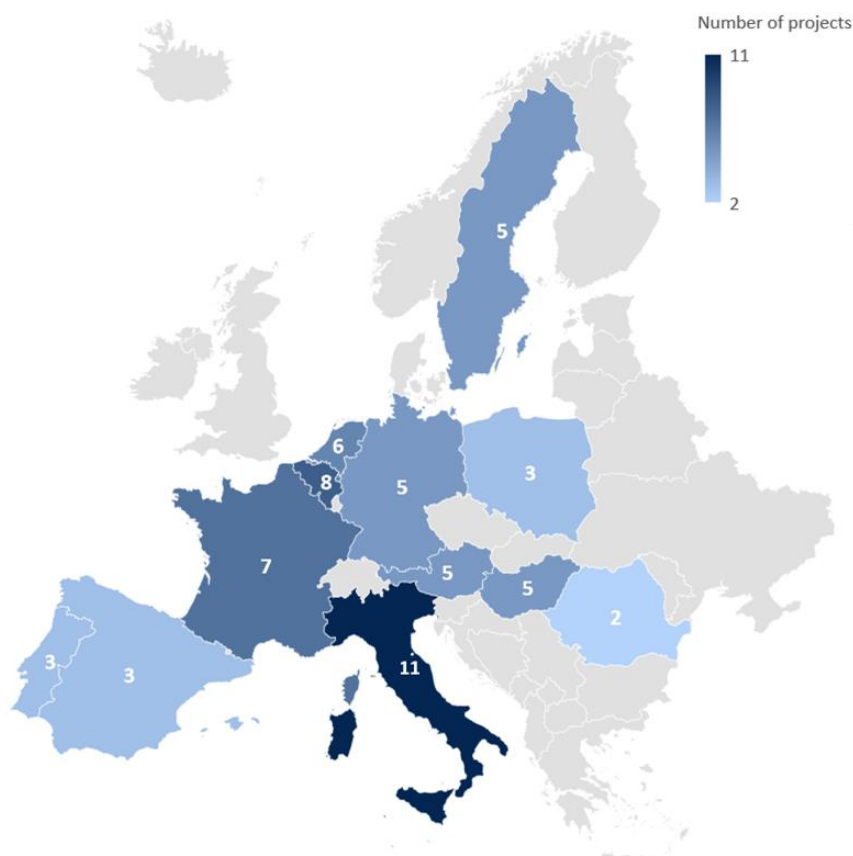
Figure 37 - Geographical scope of the number of total organisations (A), partner organisations (B) and project coordinators (C)



Source: Elaboration by the Contractor based on data from the project level deliverables that were assessed under the desk research in Task 2.

Figure 38 presents the number of implemented projects targeting each country. In terms of geographical reach, the countries targeted by the 20 implemented projects covered 12 Member States in total. The largest number of projects targeted Italy (11), followed by Belgium (8), France (7) and the Netherlands (6). Five of the implemented projects targeted Hungary, Austria, Germany and Sweden, three targeted Spain, Portugal and Poland, and two targeted Romania.

Figure 38 - Number of implemented projects by targeted country

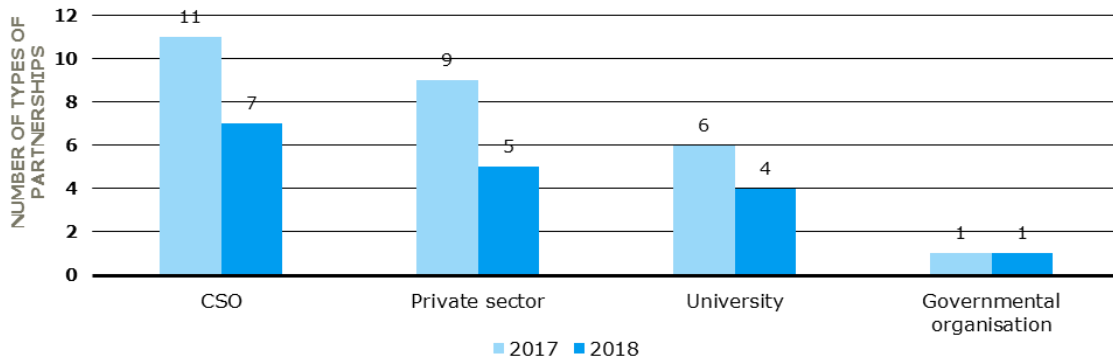


Source: Elaboration by the Contractor based on data from the project level deliverables that were assessed under the desk research in Task 2.

Partnerships

In terms of the type of partnerships that were formed, eight projects out of the 12 projects carried that were funded under the 2017 Call for Proposal (CfP) included a cross-border partnership. From the total of eight projects carried out under the 2018 CfP, seven projects included a cross-border partnership. The figure below presents an overview of the types of partnerships that were formed. All except one project carried out under the 2017 CfP and one project carried out under the 2018 CfP included a CSO in the project consortium, while nine projects from 2017 and five projects from 2018 included private sector partners. Most of the private sector partners were consultancies, digital marketing and communications agencies but they also included video production companies, a language technology company, a private research institution and games companies. Half of the total projects (20) from both 2017 and 2018 included a university in their project consortium, while only one project from each CfP had a governmental organisation as part of their consortium.

Figure 39 - Overview of type of partnership



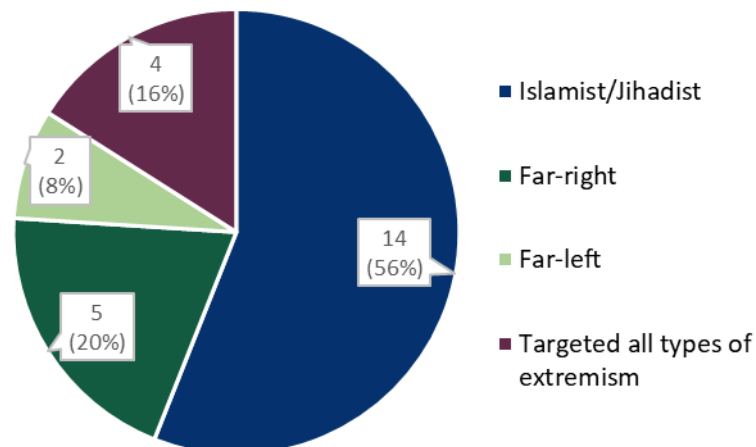
Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

Target audiences

The figure below presents an overview of the target audience's characteristics and the type of extremism addressed by the 20 projects. The majority of the projects (17 projects) targeted youth. While the socio-economic status of the target audience was not defined by all the projects, three of the projects were targeted to youth with low levels of education, and three projects targeted marginalised or disadvantaged youth. 13 projects targeted civil society organisations (CSOs) and ten projects included NGOs in their target audience, while eight of the projects were targeted to teachers and seven projects targeted migrants and refugees. A small number of projects (three projects) included people in their target audience who were engaged in combatting radicalisation or extremism, which included CSOs and practitioners, law enforcement and professionals on combatting violent extremism (CVE).

In terms of the type of extremism addressed by the projects, the majority of the projects (16 projects) addressed Islamist or Jihadist extremism, seven projects addressed right-wing and far-right extremism and five projects targeted left-wing extremism. Most of the projects (16 projects) targeted people at risk of radicalisation or extremism, while seven of the projects also targeted people who were already radicalised.

Figure 40. Overview of target audience characteristics and type of extremism addressed



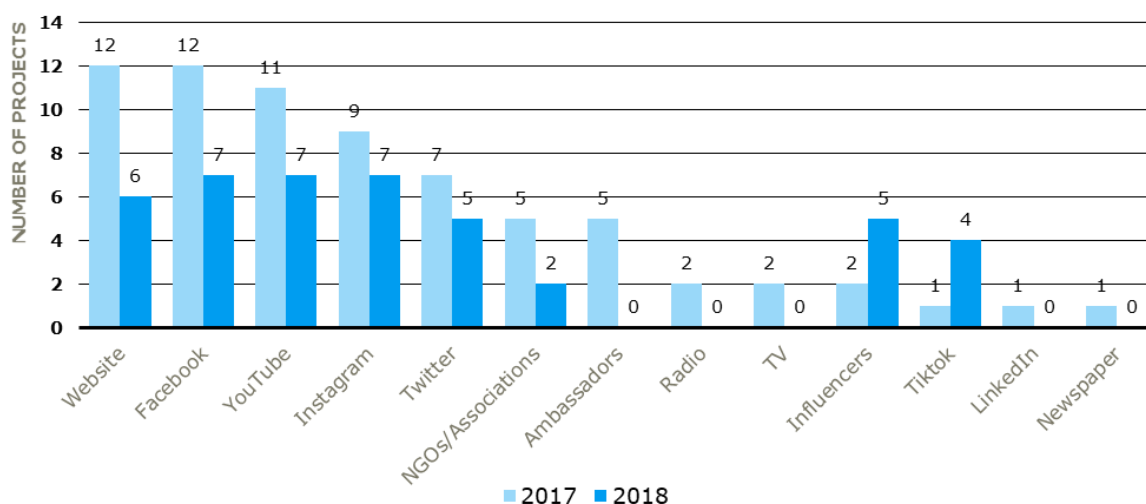
Source: Elaboration by the Contractor based on the scorecard assessment

Mediums and outputs

Figure 41 presents an overview of the different mediums used across the 20 funded projects. The most commonly used mediums were Facebook and project-specific websites,

with a total of 19 and 18 projects using them respectively. YouTube was also used by a total of 18 projects, followed by Instagram and Twitter, which were used by 16 and 12 projects respectively. Under the 2017 CfP, five projects used NGOs or associations and ambassadors, two projects used the radio, TV, and influencers, and one project used Tiktok, LinkedIn and the newspaper as their medium. Under the 2018 CfP, five projects used influencers, four projects used Tiktok and two projects used NGOs or associations as their primary medium of choice.

Figure 41 - Overview of different mediums used

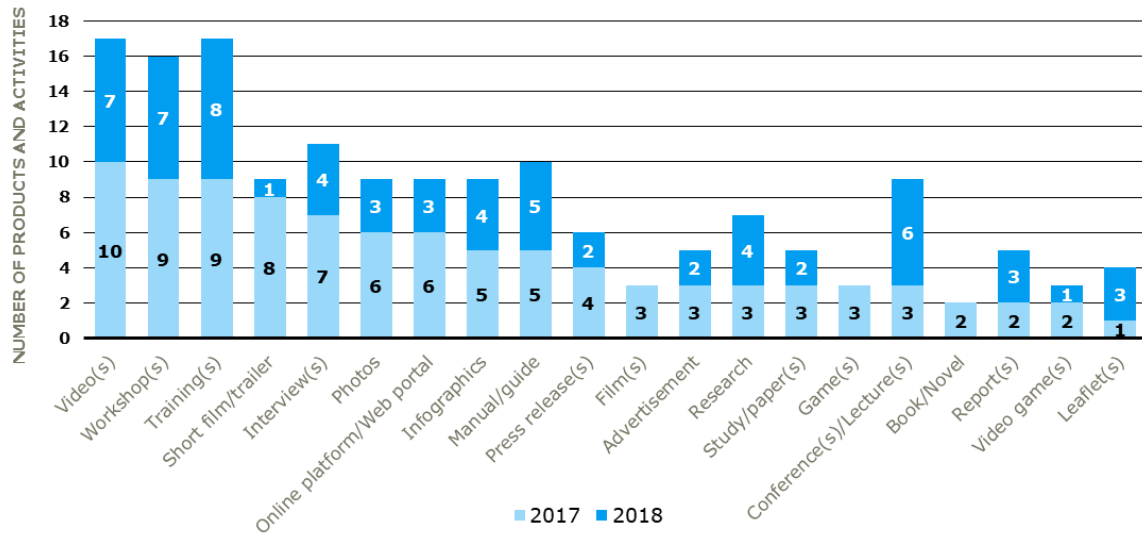


Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

Finally, Figure 41 presents an overview of the products and activities produced by the 20 projects. The most commonly produced products and activities were videos (17 projects), trainings (17 projects) and workshops (16 projects). The types of training and workshops provided included for example training on digital communications, multimedia narratives and online communication campaigns provided to campaign moderators, an in-person training event with the Dutch National Police, workshops and debates held with teachers and experts working directly with the target audiences, as well as workshops on reporting and writing skills and workshops provided to partner NGOs to improve their campaign planning skills. While the COVID-19 restrictions determined many projects to cancel their planned offline activities and change them to be conducted online, approximately half of the total projects were able to implement their offline activities which included several awareness raising events, engagement activities in schools, games, workshops and trainings. 11 projects carried out interviews and ten produced manuals or guides as part of their project, including for example specific toolkits provided to teachers and social workers working closely with youth, the primary target audience.

Photos, infographics, conferences and online platforms or web portals were produced by nine projects. Nine projects also produced short films or trailers, of which the majority (eight projects) were carried out under the 2017 CfP. Seven out of the 20 projects conducted research, and six projects produced press releases. Reports, studies or papers and advertisements were produced by five projects. A small number of the projects produced leaflets (four projects), video games (three projects), other games (three projects), films (three projects) and books or novels (two projects). Some examples of the types of material produced include personal stories of migrants and refugees, short films regarding the spread of fascism in Europe and personal stories of victims of extremism and former radicalised individuals. A weekly Instagram contest and an online quiz was also held by one of the projects to raise awareness about cognitive biases among the young target audience.

Figure 42 - Overview of products and activities produced



Source: Elaboration by the Contractor.

Impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of project activities

Many of the projects faced significant challenges in the implementation of their activities due to the COVID-19 related restrictions in most European countries. The most commonly cited impact of the restrictions on project activities was the cancellation of most or all planned offline activities, such as workshops, conferences, data collection processes and other face-to-face events. This meant that most of the projects needed to reformat the affected activities to be conducted online and make changes to their communication strategies and the organisation of work. This caused delays in the implementation of activities and project deliverables and resulted in some of the projects requesting an extension. The restrictions also caused difficulties in terms of the recruitment of a specific target group for one of the projects, and in terms of adjustments that needed to be made to the monitoring and evaluation strategies of some of the projects.

Appendix 7. User-friendly guidelines for CSEP campaigns and the European Commission and policymakers in the EU Member States

The guidelines are divided into two books which can be found in a separate annex to this report.

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