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NOTE D'INFORMATION
NOTA D'INFORMAZIONE
TER DOCUMENTIE

Brussels, March 1980

FURTHER PROGRESS IN COMMISSION'S COOPERATION WITH DEVELOPMENTAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS -NGO PROJECTS COFINANCED BY THE COMMUNITY PASS 500 MARK

The Sixth Annual Assembly of development NGOs takes place in Brussels from 19 - 21 March 1980. Some 90 NGO participants and observers will discuss with the services of the Commission the evolution of their cooperation in various areas of activity - project cofinancing in the developing countries, development education, food aid and emergency aid - and the perspectives for 1980.

This year's Assembly is different from the earlier meetings in that for the first time the delegations have been elected at previously held national Assemblies in each of the Member States.

The "Information Report" (1) on its relations with NGOs in 1979 which the Commission has recently sent to the Council and to the Parliament, confirms the growing importance of this particular action within the framework of the Community's overall development policy.

1. BACKGROUND

Introduced in 1976 with a budget of 2.5 m EUA the scheme - under which the Community may contribute, in principle 50 % of the costs of projects to be implemented in a developing country with an upper limit of 100,000 EUA per project per year (3 years maximum) - has now become an important and consolidated feature of the Community's Development Policy. The 1979 Budget was 12.5 m EUA.

To qualify for cofinancing, projects must promote the economic and social progress of the least developed sections of the population, with the beneficiary participating fully in a project's conception and implementation. Particular attention is given to rural, educational, social and multidisciplinary projects.

2. PROJECT COFINANCING

2.1 Cofinancing Results 1979

A total of 137 projects with 69 NGOs was cofinanced (178 projects with 61 NGOs in 1978). However, total requests well exceeded available funds to the extent that 37 projects (registered and put into appraisal in 1979) requesting a total Commission participation of 4.5 EUA had to be carried over to 1980. In addition, further requests for 10.0 m EUA had been received by mid March 1980. Thus, total requests already exceed last year's budget and fall just short of the expected (15 m EUA) 1980 Budget.

(1) COM(80)98 of 10 March 1980

2. By the end of 1979 the Community had cofinanced 516 developmental projects carried out for the benefit of the poorest sections of the Third World with European non governmental organisations. This brings the total Community contribution to over 30 m EUA since 1976 to projects in which the overall Community/NGO investment approaches 100 m EUA. More than 100 NGOs have availed themselves of Community funds for the implementation of projects in 84 developing countries whether linked to the Community by contractual relationships or otherwise.

2.2 Projects

Projects vary from the provision of small equipment to integrated rural development, comprising production, training, social infrastructure and equipment. In general, cofinanced projects tend to promote rural development although a significant number of projects in the health and education/training fields has also been supported. A recent and interesting development has been the number of alternative energy projects cofinanced, especially in the area of solar energy. This reflects the flexibility of the NGO response and of their capacity to react to local needs and initiatives in the most appropriate manner.

2.3 The Non Governmental Organisations

The Community's cofinancing scheme is open to all non-profit-making NGOs based in a Member State and which have an experience in the development field. While respecting the autonomy and freedom of action of NGOs the Community reserves the right to monitor the use of its funds. In channelling development funds through the NGOs the Community recognizes their unique role as animateurs at grass roots level for the development of people and shares their concern for social justice.

2.4 World-wide application

Projects may be cofinanced in any developing country without taking account of any special contractual relationship which they may have with the Community, the part of the world to which they belong nor the kind of regime they may have. Of the 30.5 m EUA committed to date 51 % has been in respect of ACP States and 49 % for the non-ACP.

2.5 Block grants

An innovation to the cofinancing scheme was introduced in 1979 to allow the Commission to support the smaller projects (i.e. where its contribution is less than 10,000 EUA) which had until 1979 normally been excluded, for administrative and practical reasons. It was thus that a block-grant system was introduced whereby the NGOs who had proven their capacity and competence in previous cofinancings with the Community for three consecutive years were able to apply, under a simplified procedure, for grants, based on a percentage of previous normal cofinancing allocations, but subject to a maximum of 50,000 EUA, twice a year. Of the 16 eligible NGOs, 12 availed themselves of such grants in 1979 at an average of 33,000 EUA per NGO. A total of 46 small projects were supported in this way.

3. DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

1979 saw the introduction of systematic cofinancing of NGO development-education projects which are aimed at increasing the awareness of development issues among the Community's public opinion. Some 17 projects, concentrating on relations between Europe and the Third World with emphasis on the Lomé Convention and aspects of Industrial and Agricultural Cooperation between the Third World and the Community, were supported for a total Community contribution of some 200,000 EUA.

4. FOOD AID AND EMERGENCY AID

The NGOs have become important channels for the distribution of Community Food and Emergency Aid. In 1979 for example 25,000 t of skimmed milk powder was allocated to some 25 NGOs (the most important being the World Council of Churches, Caritas and Oxfam) for distribution in 51 countries while more than 3 m EUA of Community Emergency Aid was channelled through NGOs mainly for relief work in Kampuchea.

Breakdown of cofinancing grants by Continent (1976 - 1979)

	No. of projects	Community contribution (EUA)	%-age
Africa	293	15.081.320	50
Asia	147	7.861.458	26
Central and Latin America	105	6.419.590	21
Middle East	23	780.998	13

Breakdown of cofinancing grants by Member State (1976 - 1979)

	No. of NGOs	No. of projects	Community contribution (EUA)	%-age
Belgium	19	73	5.607.440	18.5
Denmark	6	10	579.560	2
Germany	17	86	7.900.219	26
France	19	89	5.744.997	19
Ireland	5	63	1.130.973	4
Italy	12	43	2.659.895	9
Luxembourg	2	5	123.499	0.5
Netherlands	4	48	2.836.237	9
United Kingdom	17	99	3.593.082	12

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