

ENHANCED OUTREACH TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS:

A Collection of Good Practices
of Financial Support to Third Parties
in the Neighbourhood and Enlargement Countries

Contents

Introduction	3	Chapter IV: Civil Society Practices in the Implementation of FSTP: Monitoring, Reporting and Communicating Results	40
Methodology	7	I. Narrative monitoring and reporting	44
Chapter I: Financial Support to Third Parties – An Overview	8	II. Financial monitoring and reporting	46
I. FSTP in short	8	III. Communication and visibility	50
II. The Framework for FSTP Implementation	9	Appendices	53
Chapter II: Civil Society Practices in the Implementation of FSTP: Call and Selection Procedures	12	Appendix I. Legal Framework and Suggested Sources	53
I. The Call for Applications: Design of the Call	14	Appendix II. Organisational Development Assessment Methodology for Civil Society Organisations in Montenegro	62
II. The Call for Applications: The evaluation and selection procedure	18	Appendix III. Birlikte Self-Assessment Tool: Example	64
Chapter III: Civil Society Practices in the Implementation of FSTP: Capacity Development	24	Appendix IV. Organisational Capacity Assessment and Development	71
I. Capacity development strategy	26	Appendix V. Organisational and Advocacy Capacity Assessment Methodology	78
II. Assessing capacity development needs	28	Appendix VI. Application Form with Capacity Assessment Elements	83
III. Type of capacity development activities	30	Appendix VII. Examples of Monitoring and Evaluation Tools	96
IV. Assessing the impact of capacity development programmes	37	Appendix VIII. Example of Derogation from the Visibility Requirements	102
		Acknowledgements	103

Introduction

Background

An empowered civil society is a crucial component of any democratic system and an asset in itself. Since the adoption of the communication ‘The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe’s engagement with civil society in external relations’¹ and its endorsement by European Council conclusions in 2012, the European Commission has pursued an enhanced and more strategic approach in its engagement with local and grassroots civil society organisations (CSOs). In order to reach out to more CSOs with varying levels of managerial, technical, and advocacy capacities, beyond those based in capitals in the partner countries, the European Commission has increasingly used Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP).

With this, the European Commission has significantly increased the number of CSOs benefitting from EU support. FSTP allows for a more tailor-made support of grassroots organisations and informal groups with smaller grants and

more accessible application and selection procedures which are offered in local languages. It also provides the flexibility to define eligibility and reporting requirements adapted to the capacities of target beneficiaries within the difficult political contexts in which civil society actors often operate.

Recent evaluations of DG NEAR support to civil society confirm² that FSTP is an increasingly used tool throughout the region to enhance outreach to a wider range of local beneficiaries, notably in the areas of good governance, gender equality, human rights, and civil society support. While FSTP has contributed to developing capacities and improving sectorial networking, the evaluations also concluded that the administration of FSTP requires significant technical and managerial capacities, and implementing partners have to dedicate vast resources to the establishment of selection procedures, monitoring and reporting.

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¹ COM(2012) 492 final “The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe’s engagement with Civil Society in external relations”: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0492:FIN:EN:PDF>

² Evaluation of the EU’s engagement with Civil Society in the enlargement, neighbourhood regions and Russia over the period 2007–2018 and Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey

Purpose of the Reference Document

CSOs in the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood and the Enlargement region have acquired significant experience and expertise in managing FSTP. At the same time, several aspects related to the implementation of FSTP are not exhaustively defined in the Financial Regulations and Practical Guide on Contract Procedures for European Union External Action (PRAG)³.

With this in mind, the European Commission's DG NEAR Centre of Thematic Expertise for Civil Society Support, in close cooperation with NEAR Finance & Contracts units, launched a collaborative process, bringing together implementing partners from all NEAR regions (Western Balkans and Turkey, Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood) to allow for a peer-to-peer exchange of different practices and experiences in the implementation of

FSTP. The objective was to co-create this collection of good practices on FSTP, which aims to document the variety of existing approaches, experiences and lessons learnt from the field.

The process was structured around three main topics: **Call and Selection Procedures**, the **Capacity Development** and **Monitoring and Reporting to EU/Communicating Results**. This document is structured according to these main topics. It re-establishes the key aspects related to FSTP and provides an opportunity for consideration and reflection which aims to serve civil society partners, potential future applicants for and implementers of EU support as well as DG NEAR staff in Delegations and headquarters as inspiration and inventory of the variety of possible options within FSTP.



The collection of good practices on FSTP aims to document the variety of existing approaches, experiences and lessons learnt from the field.

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/>

Key definitions in the context of this publication

European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) - Through the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the EU offers its neighbours a privileged relationship. The ENP applies to Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, and Ukraine. It aims to strengthen prosperity, stability and security. It is based on democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, and it is a bilateral policy between the EU and each partner country, with regional cooperation initiatives: Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean.

Eastern Partnership (EaP) - Launched in 2009 as a joint policy initiative, EaP aims to deepen and strengthen relations between the European Union (EU), its Member States, and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine. The EaP aims to promote democracy and good governance, strengthen energy security, encourage sectoral reforms (including environmental protection), encourage people-to-people contacts, support economic and social development and offer additional funding for projects to reduce socio-economic imbalances and increase stability.

Southern Neighbourhood - EU cooperation in the framework of ENP includes ten partner countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine*⁴, Syria, and Tunisia. In this region, ENP is implemented through bilateral (tailor-made for each country), regional, neighbourhood-wide, and cross-border cooperation programmes, covering a wide

range of sectors, including democratic development, rule of law and good governance, state building, economic development, social protection, and migration.

Enlargement - the process whereby countries join the European Union. Any European country which respects the EU values referred to in the Treaty of the European Union (TEU) and is committed to promoting them, can apply to become a member of the EU. The current countries covered by the Enlargement process are Albania, Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey as candidate countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo* are potential candidates.

Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) - is a financial mechanism whereby the EU provides funding to one organisation as a grant applicant which, in turn, regrants funding to a number of smaller CSOs, grassroots or community-based organisations, even individuals.

Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) - is a Directorate-General of the European Commission, responsible for taking forward the EU's neighbourhood and enlargement policies.

Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA, formerly DG DEVCO) - is a Directorate-General of the European Commission, responsible for formulating the EU's international partnership and development policy, with

the ultimate goal to reduce poverty, ensure sustainable development, and promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law across the world.

Practical Guide to Contract procedures for EU external actions (PRAG) - is the sole working tool which explains both the procurement and grant award procedures which apply to European Union external actions financed from the general budget of the European Union and the European Development Fund (EDF).

Financial Regulation (FR) - is the basic text setting out the principles and procedures for the establishment and implementation of the EU budget and the control of EU finances. The Financial Regulation is the European Union's pivotal point of reference for the principles and procedures governing the establishment and implementation of the EU budget and the control of the European Community's finances.

General Conditions (GC) - contain the basic essential articles governing the implementation phase for grants contracts. General Conditions, together with the other contractual provisions, are the legally binding documents which govern the parties, rights and obligations under the contract.

DEVCO (now INTPA) Companion - provides guidance and instructions to support staff of the European Union when implementing procurement contracts in the context of external actions. These guidelines are meant to provide some sug-

⁴ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

⁵ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

gestions and good practices for the management of actions and are not legally binding, nor can they be relied upon to challenge a Contracting Authority's decision, judicially or otherwise.

Basic instruments - a comprehensive set of instruments for financing external actions covering a range of policies related to such actions, which require specific common rules and procedures for their implementation. The instruments relevant for this publication are the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance II (IPA II), and Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities (CSO-LAs) thematic program of the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).

Guidelines for grant applicants - Document explaining the purpose of a call for proposals for grants. It sets out the rules regarding who may apply, the types of operations and costs which may be financed, and the evaluation (selection and award) criteria. It also provides practical information on how to complete the application form, what documents must be annexed, and rules and procedures for applying.

Grant applicant/Beneficiary - Grant Applicant is the organisation that applies for funding following the Call for Proposals published by the EU Delegation or European Commission services. Once the proposal is selected by the contracting authority, the organisation becomes the Beneficiary of the contract and financial support.

Beneficiary/Recipient of Financial Support - in the context of this publication, refers to organisations and/or individuals benefiting from Financial Support to Third Parties

Contracting authority - refers to the EU Delegation or the European Commission acting on behalf of and for the account of the partner country/countries. In the case of indirect management, the State or another entity concluding the contract can act as the contracting authority

Core funding - financial support that covers the basic, "core" organisational and administrative costs of a CSO, including salaries of non-project staff, rent, equipment, utilities, and communications. Core funding provides the opportunities for institutional development, and enables the CSOs to do the work they defined as necessary.

Project funding - financial support focused on the implementation of a series of activities, aimed at bringing about clearly specified objectives within a defined period of time and with a defined budget. The EU awards grants to organisations and, occasionally, individuals, to help them carry out projects that further its policies.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) - According to the 2012 Communication "The Roots of Democracy"⁶, the EU considers CSOs to include all non-state, and non-profit making structures through which people organise themselves to pursue shared objectives and ideals. Operating from the local level to national, regional and international levels, CSOs comprise both urban and rural organisations, as well as formal and informal organisations. These include a range

of organisations such as grassroots, community-based, non-governmental, women's organisations, faith-based groups, foundations and research institutions, trade unions, cooperatives, professional and business associations, and the media.

Grassroots organisations - are defined as organisations operating at local level, in direct contact with citizens, and usually based in the community. Grassroots organisations can be created by people rallying around a cause or issue, or start from an advocacy group which gathers their activists, who then rally a cause.

Community based organisations (CBOs) - are local non-profit organisations or initiatives that work to generate improvements within a community on the local level and to ensure that decision makers take notice of community concerns. CBOs are usually locally formed, locally staffed, and their actions are specific to the location in which they operate, and the community they serve.

Informal groups (IG) - are non-registered civic groups or initiatives, organised to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, social or economic. Often, they are a temporary cooperation within the community to solve specific and/or ad-hoc problems.

Implementing partners (IP) - In the context of this publication, these are civil society organisations that received funding from the EU in order to re-grant funding to a number of smaller CSOs, grassroots or community-based organisations, even individuals in the form of financial support to third parties.

⁶ COM(2012) 492 final "The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations": <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0492:FIN:EN:PDF>

Methodology

This publication draws on relevant desk research of global practices, previous relevant analyses such as the Thematic Evaluation of DG NEAR Civil Society Support 2007-2018 and the Mid-Term Evaluation of Civil Society Facility for Western Balkans and Turkey 2011-2016, as well as lessons learnt from EU Delegations.

The main source for the content of this publication was an online collaborative process with implementing partners from all three regions in DG NEAR, conducted over several weeks in October-November 2020. The process included discussions in a world café format, as well as in thematic working groups, to exchange practices, ideas, concerns and perspectives on questions such as:

- How can we support informal groups?
- Can we use result-based monitoring?
- How can we support activists in a crisis situation and still collect supporting documentation?
- Should capacity development of beneficiaries be part of the overall process?

In total, 28 civil society representatives (representing 25 organisations covering all DG NEAR countries) were involved in the world café and working group discussions.

In addition to online live meetings, participants had the chance to collaborate online and contribute to the process and documents, as well as through follow-up interviews.

The results are inspiring. Bringing together a collection of practices supported by a number of case studies and real-life examples, this guide aims to prove that FSTP is a unique tool for capacity building and enhanced outreach to civil society.

Chapter I:

Financial Support to Third Parties – An Overview

I. FSTP in short

What is Financial Support to Third Parties?

- Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) is a financial mechanism whereby the EU provides funding to one organisation as a grant applicant which, in turn, re-grants funding to a number of smaller CSOs, grassroots or community-based organisations, even individuals.

What are the benefits of FSTP?

- Enhanced partnership and outreach to local civil society organisations.
- Increased access to EU funding and simplified procedures for civil society organisations and grassroots organisations operating at local level.
- Improved services and communication channels and more participatory and representative democracy.

Who can benefit?

- Civil society organisations
- Grassroots organisations
- Community based organisations
- Individual human rights activists
- Local media
- Bloggers and digital platforms
- Etc.

What are some examples of activities that can be implemented through FSTP?

- Local campaigns
- Public awareness campaigns
- Advocacy and lobbying
- Legal protection, counselling services, and social support
- Direct actions to support people and groups that are exposed to discrimination
- Cultural and youth events
- Visibility and communication/outreach activities
- Creation of web-portals enabling citizens
- Access to information and public debate
- Citizens' participation in development of local policies, programmes and action plans
- Social entrepreneurship initiatives
- Local media reporting
- Etc.

II. The Framework for FSTP Implementation

Forms of FSTP

While the most common form of FSTP is sub-granting, FSTP can take the form of many different types of support, including monetary awards, individual financial support, scholarships, covering for operating costs, etc. FSTP may also take the form of “unconditional cash transfers” where no specific activities are supported. “Unconditional” means that FSTP is given without any specific goal other than helping the final recipients, e.g., to support human right defenders, scholarships to facilitate mobility, allowances to refugees, unemployed, etc.

Where to find the legal basis

Article 204 of the Financial Regulation⁷ is the basis for any type of financial support to third parties. Essential for all participants in the FSTP processes are Chapter 6.9.2 of the PRAG⁸, Chapter 19.2.10.3 in the (previously DEVCO, now INT-PA) Companion⁹, and Art. 10.5-10.9 of the General Conditions (Annex II of the grant contract¹⁰). Generally, the description of the action in a ‘standard’ grant includes a narrative of the proposed action and information on the implementation approach of the proposal, but in the case of FSTP, this should also contain the rules which the organisation proposes to follow when implementing the FSTP. An implementing partner cannot provide FSTP if this is not explicitly foreseen in the Description of the Action!

Minimum required elements defined in the grant application/contract

According to Article 204 of the Financial Regulation, the Beneficiary may provide FSTP if the conditions are defined in the grant agreement between the Beneficiary and the Contracting Authority, with no margin for discretion. According to Art. 6.9.2. of the PRAG, applicants will need to specify in their application at least the following elements¹¹:

- The objectives and results to be obtained with the financial support.
- The different types of activities eligible for financial support, on the basis of a fixed list.
- The types of persons or categories of persons that may receive financial support.
- The criteria for selecting these entities and giving the financial support.
- The criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support for each third entity.
- The maximum amount that may be given.

Applicants may also be asked to propose the necessary documents to be kept by third parties to demonstrate that the financial support has been used in accordance with the grant contract.

The organisation should therefore specify in their grant application the procedures it proposes to follow. Once the grant contract is signed and the modality of the FSTP implementation is defined, this becomes the framework which implementing partners need to adhere to and there is no margin for discretion in implementing what has been identified and approved in the contract, unless the contract is amended based on mutual agreement and in line with the overall FSTP approach outlined in the contract between the grant beneficiary and the EU.

Before awarding the grant, the Contracting Authority will verify that the grant beneficiary offered appropriate guarantees as regards the implementation of FSTP and that all important elements are clearly defined in the grant contract to avoid the exercise of discretion by the grant beneficiary.

Simplified procedures

FSTP is meant to facilitate access to funding for less experienced organisations by allowing implementing partners to apply simplified procedures. The recipients of FSTP will not be subject to the same eligibility conditions that the grant applicants have to respect in terms of costs, action, nationality, type of entity, etc. The applicants have to define the selection criteria in their proposal and to decide freely

⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046>

⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/companion/document.do?nodeNumber=19.2.10.3>

⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/document.do?nodeNumber=6>

¹⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046>

¹¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046>

the eligible costs for the final recipients, among other conditions.

Financial responsibility

The organisation as a grant applicant will remain financially responsible for the funds transferred to the FSTP recipients. Engaging in FSTP can put a strain on the financial security and cash flows of the implementing partner, who needs to have the capacity to face unforeseen situations and demonstrate to the Contracting Authority that funds have been utilised in line with the grant agreement, including by the beneficiaries of FSTP. In the event of ineligibility of costs at the end of an action, the Contracting Authority exclusively turns to the grant beneficiary, not to the final beneficiaries.

The contractual relationship between the implementing partner and the beneficiary

There is no pre-defined format. Contractual obligations and the type of contract shall depend on the nature of the financial support (e.g., “sub-grants” vs unconditional cash transfer to refugees). The grant beneficiary must be able to prove that it has effectively transferred the money to the recipient of the FSTP in line with the procedures proposed and defined in the Description of the Action/grant contract. In order to reduce the financial risk of the grant beneficiary, it is good practice to include in the proposal the list of supporting documents, which will demonstrate that the financial support has been used in accordance with the grant contract. Such documents should include the agreement or contract, and proof that the funds have been received and that the activity for which the

financial support is given (in cases where the financial support is linked to a specific activity) has been implemented.

Although lead applicants are responsible for all segments of the grant contract, certain provisions of the General conditions¹¹ also apply to the FSTP recipients. Article 10.9 defines the obligations that should be transferred to the FSTP recipients to the extent relevant, which cover provisions on liability, conflict of interest, visibility, accounts, and technical and financial checks. The grant beneficiary has the responsibility to ensure that the FSTP recipients are aware of the obligations transferred to them. According to the guidance provided in the Companion, under 19.2.10.3, lead applicants must be aware of the limitations (and opportunities) associated with this, deviations from these obligations may not be awarded after the conclusion of the Call for Proposals.

Designing Actions with FSTP Components

When it comes to FSTP, all relevant articles of the Financial Regulations, PRAG and DEVCO (INTPA) Companion underline the importance of a clear design of the Action. The first step includes the Guidelines for applicants which explains the purpose of the call for proposals, the rules on eligibility of applicants, the types of eligible actions and costs relevant for the implementation of FSTP. The Guidelines may outline if the applicants may, shall or may not propose FSTP, i.e., if this activity is allowed, compulsory or forbidden. It can also underline that FSTP is considered essential to achieve the objective of the action and will be evaluated as an important added value element at a later stage. Some specific conditions and

It is important to find the right balance between including too much or too little information in the Description of the Action and an approach that may work for some organisations will not necessarily work for another.

restrictions may apply that could provide clear guidelines on what information the Contracting Authority expects to read in the proposal.

While it is important to provide enough details to allow the Contracting Authority to approve the proposed design of the FSTP mechanism, there should also be room for flexibility. This may be particularly crucial when operating in uncertain or unstable contexts, where an overly detailed description of the FSTP component may prove to be limiting in emergency/crisis situations in which adaptability and flexibility are crucial.

EU rules and procedures allow for significant independence and flexibility in implementing FSTP. Building on the extensive experience of implementing partners, there are many lessons that can be learnt and mistakes that can be avoided by those embarking on the FSTP ‘journey’. Collecting tried and tested approaches to different aspects of FSTP, the following sections will hopefully serve as a guide for the organisations and beneficiaries that intend to use FSTP to increase citizen participation and outreach of civil society support outside capital cities.

⁷ PRAG annex E3h2

Preparing FSTP Proposal: Checklist

When proposing Financial Support to Third Parties, organisations should reflect on:

- FSTP integration  How the FSTP component integrates within the whole action.

- Information on beneficiaries  How to gather information on potential beneficiaries and ensure a participatory approach in designing the action.

- Capacity and resources  The management capacity and resources of the organisation.

- Timeframe  The necessary time for a successful implementation of the FSTP mechanism.

- Call(s) and selection process  The design of the FSTP call(s) and selection procedures.

- Coaching and mentoring  Coaching and mentoring: capacity development may need to be provided to FSTP beneficiaries on issues such as project development and budget preparation, monitoring and reporting.

- Monitoring and reporting  Monitoring and reporting – how to monitor and report on the impact of FSTP beneficiaries.

- FSTP management budget  The budget required for managing the FSTP. A significant percentage of the budget (up to 30-40%) may be required for monitoring, supervising and reporting on FSTP.

- Knowledge transfer  Knowledge transfer: If applicants are not local organisations, it would be prudent to include a local co-applicant and foresee a strategy to transfer knowledge to build the local partner's capacity in managing FSTP.

Chapter II:

Civil Society Practices in the Implementation of FSTP: Call and Selection Procedures

The first topic addressed during the collaborative process organised in October - November 2020 was the **Call and Selection Procedures**. This theme was explored from three perspectives: the **design of the Call**, the **Call itself**, and the **selection procedures**.

Implementing Partners participating in this collaborative process represented a broad range of organisations. They included organisations working at the grassroots level through a participatory process, organisations providing FSTP in the form of projects or institutional support, and organisations working on policy development and implementation while managing FSTP mechanism with the same objectives. As a result, the approaches to calls and selection procedures differed greatly.

One size does not fit all, and the specific context may require implementing partners to apply flexibility in the call for applications. This is particularly relevant where shrinking civic space becomes an increasingly pressing issue in implementing civil society support. Many implementing partners consider that the ultimate goal is to contribute to the “growth” of beneficiaries, who would become stronger and more self-sufficient through the FSTP. There may therefore be a need to focus less on the content of the application itself and more on the capacity building of organisations, to reach outside the usual circle of beneficiaries and partners and to apply a bottom-up and on-the-ground approach. **The Call and Selection Procedures constitute the starting point of building capacities of grassroots CSOs/beneficiaries.** For many implementing partners, FSTP has also meant famil-

iarising FSTP recipients with a lighter, simplified version of EU funding rules. For example, this included using a similar structure of documents as well as following similar reporting requirements (proof of payments, etc.).

The experience of implementing partners shows there is no single formula that works for everyone. In general, this variety in the design of the call for proposals stems from the different mandates of implementing partners, the political and economic contexts in which calls are launched and the different capacities and needs of the target audience.

Financial Support to Third Parties

16 October 2020

part 3

WORLD CAFE principles

Focus on What Matters



Listen to Understand



Contribute Your Thinking



Link and Connect Ideas



Listen Together for Deeper Insights & Questions



Harvest Ideas



CALL & SELECTION procedures (table)

DESIGN of the ACTION



participatory approach



mini-grants



DESIGN of the CALL

national & regional



Mixed approach

grants to INDIVIDUALS & CBDs

THE CALL



Comments are shared during the process

COACHING during the application process

eligibility criteria - SIMPLE as possible

SELECTION procedure



local partners helping



background check

(lots of IDEAS)

I. The Call for Applications: Design of the Call

When it comes to the design of the call, there are several conclusions that emerged from the discussion.

Type of assistance provided

When asked what type of assistance was provided using FSTP as a mechanism, implementing partners indicated the following:

- Capacity development for civil society 33%
- Institutional support to organisations (operating grants) 23%
- Support to smaller actions at local level 40%
- Other 5%

*Mentimeter survey among implementing partners.

Type of beneficiaries

Thematic fields varied from democracy and good governance, rule of law and fundamental rights, public administration reform, civil society development and local democracy, social inclusion, anti-discrimination, gender equality, media and freedom of expression, education, culture and youth, to European integration, civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and reconciliation.

For EU-funded projects, implementing partners should ensure that the basic values and principles commonly shared by the EU (notably concerning racism, incitement to violence, discrimination based on religion, gender or sexual orientation) are duly respected and promoted by their FSTP recipients.

Thematic areas

Thematic fields varied from democracy and good governance, rule of law and fundamental rights, public administration reform, civil society development and local democracy, social inclusion, anti-discrimination, gender equality, media and freedom of expression, education, culture and youth, to European integration, civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and reconciliation.

For EU-funded projects, implementing partners should ensure that the basic values and principles commonly shared by the EU (notably concerning racism, incitement to violence, discrimination based on religion, gender or sexual orientation) are duly respected and promoted by their FSTP recipients.

Procedure to be used (open call, closed call, direct awards or mixed approaches)

Grant-giving organisations (i.e., for which FSTP is the main purpose) tend to organise both calls with deadlines and calls on a rolling basis. Those that have FSTP as only one of their many activities usually launch one or several one-off calls with deadlines as the preferred option.

Open calls are broadly dispersed among a wide range of actors, less demanding and/or with flexible procedures, usually on a rolling basis, at a local, regional, national or international level. While some implementing partners may

design their calls with clearly defined priorities per call, it is also possible to have them on a rolling basis and allow actors on the ground to apply at any time, identifying their own focus within the overall objectives of the programme. The design of the call can adapt to the beneficiaries' needs, providing shorter periods between submission and award, emphasising the relevance and flexibility whenever possible and appropriate. This approach relies more on "word of mouth" in the relevant communities. The experience of some implementing partners indicates that while the Description of the Action must not be vague as regards objectives/priorities, the Guidelines to FSTP applicants may give flexibility to applicants on the means/methods to achieve the desired objectives.

Closed calls are restricted and focus on a pre-selected group of organisations, even members of a certain network, capacity building trainees, selected grassroots organisations, or individuals/people in need, usually identified through needs assessment criteria or other types of studies. DG NEAR has shown openness to accept closed calls launched by membership/network organisations for their members/partners, if this was well justified (e.g., by the particularly restrictive environments or by the significant representativity of the network membership). Closed calls and preselection of applicants may be preferable in order to protect beneficiaries and choose the correct target group. However, if the objective is to reach out to remote organisations and untam-

pered stakeholders, proposals targeting a restrictive network would be difficult to justify. If the lead beneficiary intends to only finance its standard partners in a small network, there is no need to go into the complexities of FSTP and a simple “consortium approach” with co-applicants could be the preferred option.

Direct awards: Nothing prevents implementing partners from proposing FSTP in the form of “direct awards” only. However, the implementing partners should provide a clear justification for opting for this choice and provide informa-

tion on how the principles guiding FSTP will be respected (including impartiality).

Mixed approaches are also common, as well as tailor-made designs trying to reach different target groups from different categories in societies where the context is more sensitive. Designing a call for informal groups or individuals, people in need or those without access to the internet can be challenging. In highly restrictive or politically sensitive areas, calls are sometimes distributed only through trusted networks to avoid too much unwanted visibility.

Application forms and required documentation

In general, calls should be designed to identify quality proposals. In the context of FSTP, quality proposals are not necessarily the best-written applications but those which respond best to the local context and are actually able to make a difference on the ground - the change-makers.

Most implementing partners agreed that balance is needed in the design of the call, in order to avoid unnecessary additional costs, time, and human resources for beneficiaries to apply. The right balance needs to be found between asking FSTP beneficiaries to provide details and giving them space for flexibility. While calls should remain simple, beneficiaries tend to appreciate clear guidelines with clear eligibility criteria.

Several implementing partners indicated they have also tried a more informal approach, with short application forms. Some applications require applicants to answer a limited number of pre-defined questions (5-10), while others simply invite organisations to introduce themselves.

Several implementing partners do not even require applicants to complete the application form on the website, and incomplete application forms do not automatically bring about rejection. During the collaborative process, most implementing partners agreed that instead of focusing on the content of the application itself, the focus should be on the organisation seeking FSTP. The application can be the start of a meaningful dialogue, not the end of a formal assessment.

While some implementing partners emphasise that applications should not hold more weight than the organisation’s mission, values, and strategic direction, others ask their applicants



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Closed Calls

How can organisations justify a preselection of FSTP applicants prior to the call? The example below shows how an implementing partner dealt with this issue.

The Kosovar Civil Society Foundation implemented a donor-funded programme for social integration, which included the launch of a call to provide skills training to specific target groups, i.e., for intermediary organisations who would deliver capacity building to youth on a variety of themes. KCSF used a restricted call for providers of specific trainings, with competition among 15 potential CSOs. Only organisations with proven record of implementation of similar interventions, prior experience and demonstrated technical capacities in providing this type of training were invited to the call. The identification of CSOs to be invited for the restricted call was a result of an extensive research and stakeholder’s consultation process, based on clearly defined needs and predetermined criteria. Since the list of potential providers of such trainings was relatively limited and exhaustive. The approach was accepted by the donor (the Government of Luxembourg initiative was covered through bilateral funds from an EU Member State) and was not seen as non-transparent.

to prove their capacity and commitment through a more elaborate application.

Using local languages

Language can be a barrier for many organisations. With support from implementing partners, both the language barrier and a weak capacity to write application forms can be surpassed. There is a general agreement in the community of practice that calls in local languages are crucial for reaching out to the right FSTP beneficiaries (i.e., going beyond “the usual suspects”).

Offline or online submissions

While online applications are quite wide-spread, exceptions are made in particular for difficult environments (when applications have to be sent through more secure channels). Some organisations indicated that they accept applications even by phone. Dedicated staff go through a list of questions with the applicant and records the answers in a secure manner. This can address both security issues (e.g., to ensure that there is no copy of the application on the beneficiary’s side) and connectivity problems in remote areas.

Communicating about the call

When asked about the channels used to communicate information about FSTP to the wider public implementing partners indicated the following:

- Call announcement published through project website 26%
- Call announcement published through social media 22%
- Call announcement published in print media 5%
- Call announcement published in digital media 10%

- Call announcement published in outdoor media (including posters) 3%
- Using different platforms and/or networks 17%
- Invitation to the potential applicants without a call announcement 9%
- Other 9%

*Mentimeter survey results conducted during the collaborative process.

As expected, project websites and social media remain the most used channels for communication when publishing the call. However, for specific thematic calls or in difficult environments, platforms and networks also act as a good promotion channel.

Calls in sensitive / restrictive environments

Restrictive environments require alternative approaches to protect the safety and security of applicants and beneficiaries. Implementing partners often use closed calls to avoid unnecessary exposure of applicants. Some implementing partners also use due diligence in the form of background checks or references from trusted sources (for example, by requiring applicants to provide a number of references). Trusted local partners or external local advisors can help assess the quality and truthfulness of work done by local organisations, which can help with the preselection of candidates.

Calls in sensitive/restrictive environments should address, as early as possible, the restrictions to confidentiality on the identity of the final recipients imposed by art. 10(9) (see above). If necessary, the intervention of the Contracting Authority may be required to obtain special derogations.

Project websites and social media remain the most used channels of communication for open calls.

All implementing partners working in difficult and restrictive environments indicated the importance of using secure communication channels. Although closed calls usually go through special mailing lists, local partners or beneficiaries, having a secure way of communicating with possible beneficiaries is crucial. Using encrypted email (such as Proton) or messaging services (such as Signal) and secure phone lines significantly reduce the risk of exposure for applicants.

Irrespective of the possible precautions, implementing partners operating in restrictive environments agree on the required willingness and capacity to take more risks, and think of possible mitigation strategies in all stages of the process. This needs to be kept in mind from the very beginning of the process, when designing the call.

The call as capacity development tool

Many organisations are offering assistance during the call, such as information sessions, trainings, or even the possibility of finding a partner.

Many types of **coaching for preparing applications** were mentioned during the discussion with implementing partners: information sessions prior to the call, the provision of very detailed guidelines, two-phase calls with face-to-face meetings in between to improve the application, coaching on proposal writing for community-based organisations, etc.

One implementing partner indicated a practice of pre-award coaching done via Skype calls, or outreach missions to meet the applicants, helping them throughout the process. The application is seen more as a starting point of a dialogue, through which it is developed further together with the applicant, reshaping and clarifying activities, monitoring targets, etc. In the same spirit, the application can also act as the first capacity building activity for beneficiaries. More details about some of these capacity development approaches will be provided in the next chapter.



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Call as capacity building tool

Fund for Active Citizenship, fAKT, Montenegro: Capacity development stands at the core of any FSTP implemented by fAKT. Calls include detailed guidelines and mandatory capacity development activities. Through open calls, fAKT encourages organisations to build their capacities in specific areas such as team building, development of organisational capacities, fundraising from the local community and improvement of the organisation's public image. In line with the FSTP requirements agreed when signing the EU grant, organisations were expected to allocate up to 30% of the budget for capacity development activities to build expertise in specific areas. fAKT launches open calls for selection of organisations to be included in mandatory trainings. Following the capacity development process, these organisations are then invited to apply for small grants for the implementation of their projects. In general, fAKT encourages FSTP recipients to allocate at least part of their budget to capacity development activities.

Requiring co-financing

Implementing partners do not share a common view on whether to require FSTP beneficiaries to provide co-financing. While some implementing partners indicated that co-financing acts as a huge burden and disincentive for applicants, others emphasized that a small financial contribution could indicate greater commitment, improve the fundraising skills of FSTP applicants and increase sustainability. The two real-life examples that follow are an indication of these two different approaches.



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Co-financing

As it was a requirement of the EU grant, **fAKT Montenegro** asked its FSTP beneficiaries for 10% co-financing. This proved to be difficult to fulfil for local organisations with limited fundraising capacities. Therefore, fAKT decided to provide fundraising training to the applicants. The trainings were crucial for applicants in securing the required co-funding.

For the **Centre for Environment from Bosnia-Herzegovina** co-funding was a tool for further capacity building of small grassroots organisations. Through close cooperation and mentoring, some grassroots organisations built partnerships with other donors, and in some cases with local authorities. The role of the Centre was essential in this respect, helping organisations find partners at the local level.

II. The Call for Applications: The evaluation and selection procedure

For many implementing partners FSTP is not their main organisational purpose, and implementing an FSTP component may suddenly detach them from their traditional partners, as they hold the power to distribute financial resources to them. In order to ensure transparency and equal treatment, implementing partners do not only have to develop their own selection procedures in line with capacity building schemes, but also overcome a difficult situation of choosing from among their peers.

In order to build the trust of their beneficiaries, implementing partners define clear rules on how to conduct the selection procedure, establish the Evaluation Committees, conduct due diligence checks, etc. Implementing partners participating in this collaborative process all share a common approach to select organisations based on their long-term mission with **clear criteria** from the start rather than making a selection based purely on a proposal.

CASE STUDY



How to build trust in communities

The **Women Media & Development Association** developed a project (“Women in the Jordan Valley”) focused on women’s participation in economic activities and included coaching at all stages of the application, since the project was focusing on marginalised women with no income opportunities. The organisation launched an open call for women and 125 women were included in a training programme and became eligible for a closed call for implementing a 3-year project. Coaching included training in proposal writing, project planning, creating a budget, calculating in-kind contributions, etc. Coaching and capacity development started together with the selection, even before the call itself. TAM provided selected women with expert support to review proposals, give comments, and develop qualified proposals. The selection criteria were also co-created with the women involved, who were divided in groups of six, with each group having one representative participating as an observer in the further selection process.

The Selection Committee was composed of civil society experts, and a technical expert in charge of an initial business study in the Jordan Valley. According to TAM, the actual participation of women’s representatives as observers, with all proposals and criteria in their hands, was a tipping point for winning their trust. At the end of the process, eleven proposals were selected, and all beneficiaries went through a further coaching process on how to carry out procurement processes, purchase orders, how to draft contracts, etc. The presence of final beneficiaries during the selection process had an important impact in dispelling any suspicion of corruption and gaining the trust of the targeted community.

Setting up the Evaluation Committee

Evaluation committees can be chosen by members of the organisation, and they can include external and internal experts.



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Evaluation Committee

fAKT Montenegro provided an interesting example of having a long-standing grant evaluation committee of seven external civil society experts, representing the donor community (UNDP, the British Embassy, etc.). External experts can have expertise in civil society project development and cycle, but they can also be thematic experts, with specialization in specific policy areas such as the environment, education, etc. It is important to note that all committee members are volunteers.

For a recent call launched in 2021, **the Secretariat of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum** set up a Selection Committee composed of three external evaluators selected by the EaP CSF Secretariat (in consultation with the EaP CSF Steering Committee) from respondents to a call for expression of interest. Two EaP CSF Steering Committee members and a member of the EaP CSF Secretariat also participated in the Selection Committee as observers. A representative of DG NEAR might opt in to take part in the Selection Committee in the capacity of an observer. The observers do not score project proposals but review them and participate in the online discussion of the Selection Committee.

The Kosovar Civil Society Foundation has established a Pool of External Evaluators with experts from Kosovo and the region, in which external experts are selected based on specific criteria ensuring that each evaluation member has a profile that guarantees a high level of knowledge and expertise, sufficient previous experience, no conflict of interest and high level of integrity and good reputation. The pool is updated with new experts on a periodic basis, a few times a year. For each Call for Proposals, specific Grants Evaluation Teams are established by randomly drawing five names from the pool. Specific quotas for gender representation and regional representations are set, while no expert can be drawn for more than two calls in a row. The names and profiles of each member of the Pool of External Evaluators is public. Evaluation is done based on detailed guidelines with predetermined criteria and scores for each criterion, based on written applications and public interviews. <https://www.kcsfoundation.org/en/grants/imp-sch/eja-kosovo-program/evaluation/>.

External evaluators can bring additional thematic expertise to the Evaluation Committees set up for selecting FSTP beneficiaries.

Selection processes and criteria

Evaluation Committee members can either evaluate applications **independently** (ensuring different members do not influence each other in their assessments) or **collectively**, discussing each application together. Some organisations consider that a collective evaluation ensures more transparency. In certain cases, not only are all the members of the Evaluation Committee present, but applicants are also invited to observe and discuss results. This reduces mistrust within the community regarding the allocation of resources. Important to note: when third parties are invited to attend evaluation sessions, issues concerning confidentiality need to be properly addressed early on. Since the applicants normally maintain intellectual ownership on the proposed actions, their disclosure to third parties may be subject to restrictions. The participants should therefore be warned that, by submitting their proposal, they are waiving (entirely or partially) their rights to treat the proposal as confidential.

The selection procedure can have more than one round. Sometimes there are two rounds of selection with capacity development components integrated in-between. Local partners can be important in drafting and reshaping the proposal and clarifying the actions. Certain implementing partners, evaluate the performance of the whole organisation in addition to the technical, financial, and even administrative capacity of the potential beneficiaries. They score each element to create a risk rating index and evaluate if the organisation is eligible to implement community-based initiatives.

CASE STUDY



Criteria for selection

The **Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF)** assesses the eligibility of proposals based on the following criteria: identity, nature, necessity, and approach.

1. The identity of the applicant

EMHRF has clear requirements for which civil society actors are eligible for support, defined by its own mission of promoting and protecting universal rights and freedoms and using peaceful means. In the context of its support actions, EMFHR pays specific attention to groups considered to be especially vulnerable and in need of special assistance because of the scope of their action or because of the nature of the rights they defend (e.g., minorities, marginalised youth, and women, etc.).

2. Nature of the proposal

EMHRF gives priority to cover the core costs of civil society actors, in addition to accepting proposals dealing with fundamental rights and freedoms, protection needs, and innovative or sensitive issues and targeting marginalised and vulnerable persons.

3. Necessity of the request

EMHRF requires applicants to prove that they face risks or work within a difficult context, and that no other donor has agreed to support the request.

4. Approach of the applicant

EMHRF asks applicants to collaborate with other civil society actors, and to prove that their performance is recognised by the communities served.

Background checks

Implementing partners often tend to integrate some background checks in their selection procedures. Background checks are usually conducted together with local partner organisations, other local actors or local consultants already involved in capacity building. The approaches vary from cases where projects must provide references which helps to triangulate and flag any potential problems, and those where experts look at the specific legal or policy background, or to those where the organisation of the implementing partner carries out the due diligence directly. Some organisations take into account the opinion /feedback of democracy activists or previous beneficiaries in their selection. Local partners are often involved in carrying out the first background checks, taking into account the eligibility criteria. Background checks and the validation of actors by other active individuals is also a very good tool for identifying GONGOs. Background checks must not run against the principle of impartiality, and it is therefore important that implementing partners provide information regarding the nature and criteria of such background checks in their applications.



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Different Types of Background Checks

Belgrade Open School's Green Incubator project aims to develop a competent civil society that contributes to reform processes and Serbia's EU integration. In particular, the project aims to strengthen the capacities of civil society organisations dealing with environmental issues. During the FSTP selection procedure, it became apparent that local CSOs sometimes did not have enough knowledge about specialised topics to assess the feasibility of their proposed activities. The engagement of external experts in thematic areas such as waste management, nature protection and air quality proved to be a good practice. Sometimes project proposals look very good and tick all the right boxes but are not feasible since they are not in line with certain policy aspects or even the legislative framework of the country. Technical and/or legislative feasibility checks by thematic experts ensure that selected projects can actually be implemented.

FAKT Montenegro carries out due diligence of potential beneficiaries, among other things by checking the social media presence of applicants. This is a basic type of due diligence, but it can still provide useful information for the selection process.

In order to ensure political neutrality, the **Kosovar Civil Society Foundation** put together a list of political positions (current or in office during the last four years) of people whose CSOs cannot benefit from their funds. All applicants were required to fill in self-declaration forms to confirm they did not fall into this category, as well as maintain such confirmation throughout the implementation period. The evaluation organised by KCSF also includes public interviews, with applicants presenting their projects in detail and responding to the specific questions by the Grant Evaluation Team. This was in order to avoid the exclusion of good projects with badly written proposals, but also to identify projects written by consultants, which would indicate a lack of ownership from the organisation. An initial short-list was created with applicants having reached the minimum score necessary for passing to the interview stage. Evaluators were allowed to adjust the scores after the interviews. The fact that interviews were public (they were livestreamed and permanently accessible via social media channels) ensured the transparency of the overall process and potentially contributed to improving the organisations' link to their constituencies.

Feedback to non-selected applicants

It is a common practice of implementing partners to provide detailed feedback to applicants as part of their capacity development. In several cases, unsuccessful applicants were given the opportunity to get a more detailed feedback, if useful for future proposals. In order to ensure transparency and equality of applicants, implementing partners share the scores or evaluation committee notes with applicants. In some cases, applicants can also receive information on their strengths and weaknesses, along with an invitation for further discussion to help improve the application for the next call.



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Feedback to Applicants

The Secretariat of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum involved external evaluators in their evaluation and selection process, who were able to provide very detailed notes on all discussed proposals. They provided these detailed notes as feedback to both successful and rejected applicants.

The Kosovo Women's Network is keeping a record of all comments provided by the grant reviewing committee on applications. They then send comments to both successful and unsuccessful applicants as coaching for further fundraising activities, allowing for the improvement of future applications.

Designing call and selection procedures: Checklist

When designing call and selection procedures, organisations should reflect on:

- Targeted beneficiaries  The type of beneficiaries to be targeted through FSTP (which should always be in line with the initial Guidelines for Applicants, the Description of the Action agreed with the EU or any other relevant framework agreed with other donors).

- Procedure to be used  Consider the objective of the FSTP, the targeted beneficiaries and the procedure to be used (open call, closed call, direct awards or a mix of approaches). Implementing partners should have a strong justification for their proposed approach and its compliance with the FSTP guiding principles.

- Application forms and required documentation  The application forms and required documentation, taking into account FSTP beneficiaries' capacities and any donor requirements that may need to be passed on to their beneficiaries.

- Communication approach  The communication approach to be used, which will reflect the chosen type of procedure. Different approaches will be required for an open call aiming to reach out to as many organisations as possible versus a restricted call dedicated to supporting organisations in sensitive political contexts or the members of a network.

- Language of the calls  The language of the calls. Language barriers can reduce the outreach of FSTP calls and making calls and application documents/procedures available in local languages may increase the outreach to local organisations.

- Channels to submit proposals  Channels to submit proposals: Online submissions are generally easier to manage. In more restrictive and difficult environments they can be supplemented by offline submissions (including by phone).

- Calls may constitute capacity development tools  Calls may constitute capacity development tools: As a minimum, feedback to non-selected applicants can help those organisations or individuals improve their future proposals.

- Selection processes and criteria  Selection processes and criteria constitute a starting point for building trust in communities

Chapter III:

Civil Society Practices in the Implementation of FSTP: Capacity Development

The second topic addressed during the collaborative process was **capacity development**.

The European Commission's own theoretical framework is based on the standard Organisation for Economic Co-ordination and Development (OECD) definition of capacity development and focuses primarily on ways to drive change. The OECD¹³ defines capacity development as "the process by which individuals, groups and organisations, institutions and countries develop, enhance and organise their systems, resources and knowledge. Actual capacity development is reflected in their individual and collective abilities, to perform functions, solve problems and achieve objectives." The definition avoids any judgement on the objectives that people choose to pursue, or what should count as success in the management of their collective efforts.

Discussions during the collaborative process confirmed the overall findings of recent evaluations according to which

FSTP contributed to a significant extent to developing and strengthening capacities among organisations. Implementing partners agreed that capacity development strongly contributed to organisational development at the local level and that in some countries it improved sectoral networking.

Capacity development emerged as an important crosscutting issue, which can successfully be integrated at every single stage of the FSTP process. The experience of implementing partners shows that the redistribution of financial resources should always go hand in hand with a capacity development effort, which can be the most tangible result of FSTP in the longer term. According to a live survey conducted with implementing partners during the collaborative process, one third of the assistance provided through FSTP was capacity development assistance to CSOs. An even more significant fact is that 81.8% of implementing partners provided capacity development activities throughout **the whole FSTP process** (project preparation, procurement,

monitoring and evaluation, human resources, financial and institutional development, etc.). Participants in the collaborative process highlighted the particular value of mentoring in capacity development support provided to FSTP beneficiaries.

A successful capacity development programme for FSTP beneficiaries will also contribute **to reducing the financial and reputational risks** faced by implementing partners, fundamentally also acts as a risk management strategy. As can be seen in the examples below, info-sessions, coaching and mentoring on financial issues either before or after contract signature, working with beneficiaries on improving their internal policies or accounting can all contribute to reducing the risk of ineligible costs to be incurred by the implementing partner at a later stage. And therefore, can reinforce trust between the donor and the organisation implementing FSTP creating a virtuous circle of trust between the donor - the implementing partner - the FSTP beneficiaries and local communities.

¹³ OECD-DAC - Guidelines and Reference Series Applying Strategic Environmental Assessment: Good Practice Guidance for Development Co-operation, OECD, Paris, 2006

Financial Support to Third Parties

16 October 2020

part 5

WORLD CAFE principles

Focus on What Matters



Listen to Understand



Contribute Your Thinking



Link and Connect Ideas



Listen Together for Deeper Insights & Questions



Harvest Ideas



COACHING & CAPACITY BUILDING

REFLECTION of your plans on FSTP on the PROPOSAL to EC?

IMPACT / EFFECT

TYPE of CAPACITY BUILDING (CB)

ELSE



POSITIVE FEEDBACK during coaching



MENTORING



CREDIBILITY

PROGRAM for CAPACITY BUILDING

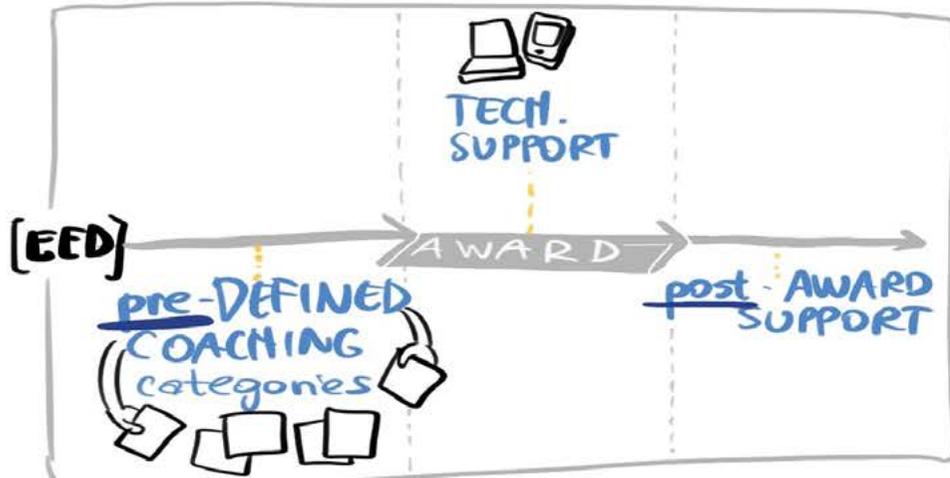


CAREFUL SELECTION

TRUST & flexibility
key words



30% of the GRANT should be devoted to CB



I. Capacity development strategy

What is a capacity development strategy?

A capacity development strategy will generally indicate the following:

- the range of recipients who can receive support (individuals, organisations, networks, etc.)
- the range of methodologies for capacity development interventions (trainings, coaching, mentoring, a mixed approach, etc.)
- the range of capacities that are to be developed (for example, according to PACT's capacity development framework¹⁴, these can be technical, operational, systemic, adaptive, or influencing)

Traditionally, capacity development efforts have focused at the individual and organisational levels. Recently, however, capacity development practitioners are increasingly recognising the importance of working at the system and network levels in order to bring multiple competencies to work on complex challenges¹⁵.

¹⁴ <https://www.pactworld.org/library/pacts-approach-capacity-development>

¹⁵ <https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/themes/capacitydevelopment>

¹⁶ <https://www.pactworld.org/library/pacts-approach-capacity-development>

CASE STUDY

PACT's Capacity Development Framework

Pact has been focusing on strengthening community-based organisations, civil society organisations, advocacy groups and government agencies for over 40 years. The organisation defines capacity development as “a continuous process that fosters the abilities and agency of individuals, organisations, and communities to overcome challenges and contribute to positive social change. Though often developed in response to an immediate and specific issue, capacities are adaptable to future opportunities and challenges.” Pact recently launched a new set of capacity development tools based on what is known as “Capacity Development 2.0”¹⁶.

This framework involves methodically embedding programmatic efforts in a larger local systems approach. This begins with delineating, mapping, and analysing relevant systems. Pact and its partners then co-create action and change plans, including all actors needed to foster meaningful social change. Pact and partners identify and leverage opportunities and link them with associated capacities to support and strengthen as needed. The resulting highly participatory co-design processes lay out clear steps for progress.

With PACT's Capacity Solutions Platform, PACT and its partners can capture qualitative and quantitative data to track and understand organisations' progress.

Pact also relies on the open-source, evidence-based methodology known as Collective Impact, which seeks to make systems-based approaches to change easy to understand and co-implement, even for nascent local groups. Their capacity development framework is built around the following pillars:

- Ongoing support based on **Change Action Plans**
- **Organisational Performance Index:** the tools measure performance in the four domains of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability.
- **System Mapping:** iterative participatory processes to map systems and networks, embedding systems thinking into the approach to assist local partners to better see the system in which they operate.
- **Network Analysis and Strengthening:** the process allows partners to visualize patterns of interaction, ask better questions and deepen the understanding of how their network operates, and develop strategies for strengthening their network.
- **Collective Impact** offers a common language and structured approach to follow that has proven to be successful around the world.
- **The Capacity Solutions Platform** is an online platform that tracks and measures the results of partners' capacity development efforts; allows access to online global CD data; provides a platform for data collection, storage, visualisation, analysis, reporting and learning; and enables organisations' staff and PACT's own staff to make informed decisions about performance.

Aim of capacity development strategies

When asked about the purpose of capacity development activities included throughout the FSTP process, implementing partners provided the following answers:

- Training was aimed at strengthening of organisational and management capacities of CSOs 31%
- Advocacy at local level 16%
- Development of local policies and action plans 11%
- Local fundraising 15%
- In-house mentorship for grassroots activists in solving problems on the ground 16%

*Mentimeter survey among implementing partners

Underlying principles of capacity development strategies

Several common practices in terms of the underlying principles of capacity development programmes emerged from the collaborative process:

- Capacity development was seen as being extremely important in supporting grassroot organisations. A continuous approach in all offered support is needed before, during and after financing. Capacity development needs to be considered as a long-term iterative process (also in line with the approach laid out in DG NEAR's "Guidance Note on Addressing capacity development in planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation")¹⁷.

- Flexibility is necessary, as one size does not fit all when working with local CSOs. While many implementing partners have predefined coaching methods, these proved to be useful to local organisations only if adapted and tailor-made. On-demand training, mentoring, and coaching throughout the entire duration of support is crucial. This allows organisations to provide capacity development tools in reaction to local partners' needs. Implementing organisations may benefit from having a contingency for unforeseen capacity development needs, depending on the limitations of their own contract with the donor.
- Local ownership of all interventions is considered crucial. Capacity development programmes are more effective when designed in a participatory manner. Stakeholders should be involved in deciding on the needs and targets of capacity development. Furthermore, they should be involved in designing the processes of change and assume leadership for them.
- Organisations involved in setting up capacity development programmes should act at multiple levels to achieve sustainable results: this includes working with individuals, institutions, and networks, always taking into account the broader social and political context that shapes any transformative process.
- Continuous reflection by the implementing partner on their capacity development approach is key to responding to the needs of local CSOs. Such an approach allows

local CSOs to define their own organisational path. This approach requires a long-term investment by the implementing partner and is successful for organisations whose mission is devoted to supporting local civil society capacity development or organisations who work closely with local actors and rely on local knowledge.

- Implementing partners need to find the balance between, continuous reflection and innovations and, on the other hand, the requirements of the donor. The environment in which they operate requires constant innovation and change but donors' requirements do not adapt at the same pace. The key is for implementing partners to demonstrate that they are able to adapt to the environment on the ground, while detailing as much as possible how and when the development path for supported organisations is to be agreed during project implementation.
- During the collaborative process, implementing partners also concluded that capacity building approaches were an important element of an overall effort of building a trust relationship with beneficiaries of FSTP. Trust is about believing in beneficiaries' capacities and understanding their true potential. Gaining the trust of the local community is crucial and this is why many implementing partners invest significant FSTP resources in capacity development activities that improve advocacy at local level, in the development of local policies, action plans, and local fundraising.

¹⁷ DG NEAR's "Guidance Note on Addressing capacity development in planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation, Page 5

II. Assessing capacity development needs

In order to create a capacity development framework that works, those who support it need to understand not only the local context but also the extent to which beneficiaries have existing capacities. The question of how to assess the existing capacities of an organisation and /or individual is crucial both in the selection of FSTP beneficiaries and in ensuring they are provided with appropriate support.

The European Commission's "Toolkit for Capacity Development" (2010)¹⁸ highlights that while capacity assessments can include "gap analyses", they should not be limited to this for two main reasons:

- Gap analyses tend to identify weaknesses instead of strengths — and may thus be highly demotivating.
- Gap analyses may measure the distance to a desired ideal — but they do not explain why the situation is as it is — they identify symptoms rather than causes.

Capacity assessments are setting the stage for capacity development processes. How, when and by whom they are made is crucial for the success or failure of subsequent CD processes.

During the collaborative process, several implementing partners indicated they either use internationally recognised tools for capacity assessment or have developed their own capacity assessment tools. Some of these are described below in more detail. Although not specifically addressing the capacity development of civil society organisations, the European Commission's "Toolkit for Capacity Development" is also a good reference source.



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Assessing capacity

The **Fund for Active Citizenship (fAKT)**, Montenegro. fAKT developed an organisational development assessment methodology – CSO Development Index, its primary purpose is to support CSOs in identifying their development priorities, and to facilitate measurable monitoring of its contribution to the development of CSOs supported through its grant programs and trainings. Assessments obtained using this methodology are not used when assessing the quality of projects of CSOs that go through the Index but are exclusively used as a guideline in the development of CSOs. The CSO development index covers five dimensions: organisational structure and legal framework; organisational capacity and infrastructure; financial stability, service provision and public image (each dimension includes 4-6 questions/indicators that are rated separately, and for each of these questions, a list of items is required to verify the score). The index is also a good self-assessment tool. The tool is available in the annexes of this document.

The **Civil Society Development Centre - STGM**, Turkey, is providing general operating grants and mentoring. Its work is based on a capacity development tool which provides a systematic perspective through established criteria for organisational systems. Ten different management areas and five fundamental principles guide the entire process: accountability, participation, transparency, sustainability, and value generation. The self-assessment tool in Excel (available as an annex) allows beneficiaries to score their own organisations, their mission, and project targets in three rounds. The tool can prioritise the needs and formulate annual improvement plans. Beneficiaries can use the tool as a starting point for self-reflection. The tool allows for further development through progress markers and integration of qualitative/quantitative results into final reports. The basic concept consists of an evaluation questionnaire, score table and graphs, prioritisation matrix, and improvement plan. It offers three rounds of

¹⁸ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/t-and-m-series/documents/reference-document-nr-6-toolkit-capacity-development-2010>



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Assessing capacity (continued)

self-assessment by assessment teams with mentor facilitation, these include: baseline, end of the 1st year, end of the programme. It tracks changes in capacity scores, rate of realisation of improvement targets and achievement on tailor-made progress markers. Based on the evaluation of the answers, a table and a graph are generated, visualizing the organisation's growth curve, and resulting in a Prioritization Matrix. Its conclusions outline what should be improved, alternative solutions, the impact on CSOs strategy and targets, time needed for improvement, and a prioritised improvement index, where themes with the highest score have the highest priority. Based on this Prioritization Matrix, the Improvement Plan is then generated.

People in Need (PIN) uses an organisational capacity assessment and development tool. The structure and questions cover all important aspects of the organisation's life cycle: origin story and strategy; relationships; programmes, capacities, and resources; and internal governance and administration. The assessment is used as a baseline of organisational development and as a basis for organisational development and strategic plans. Strategic plans may have different formats according to the type and size of the organisation. In the case of informal initiatives these may be very brief (2-5 page) documents that are revised during the course of the project as needed. The organisational capacity assessment and development tool is provided in the annexes. Documents in the annexes serve as an example of an organisational capacity assessment PIN would use for newly emerging grassroots initiatives with a focus on their strategic vision and the basic foundations of organisational management.

Kosovo Women's Network: During the application phase, KWN provides applicants with comments for improving the application so that it becomes suitable for multiple donors and calls. This improves the organisational capacity of FSTP applicants to apply to future calls. During implementation, KWN utilises the internationally recognised methodology for

capacity assessment of CSOs over time called the "Organisational and Advocacy Capacity Assessment" (OACA). This methodology provides an organisational and advocacy assessment of CSOs, which is structured around several sub-fields in the context of their needs assessment. The Assessment serves as a diagnostic test to identify the specific needs of CSOs, thereby informing tailored Capacity Development Plans (CDPs). Based on the Assessment, KWN supports members in developing tailored CDPs towards addressing their identified capacity development priorities. KWN then provides individual mentoring for members, by using the 'learning by doing' approach on issues such as advocacy, organisational management or grant management. The Assessment produces a numerical score according to the changes that can be measured. The Assessment establishes a baseline for partners' capacities, while pinpointing areas for furthering their capacities. The identified specific needs of CSOs, included in their tailored CDPs, can be used for targeted interventions to further CSO capacities. Progress can be measured over time by repeating the Assessment at the end of each Action. The Organisational and Advocacy Capacity Index Score Cards are included in the annexes.

The **Black Sea Trust** develops its beneficiaries' capacity development plans based on a risk assessment questionnaire in the application form and the answers provided by applicants. Applicants are asked whether the organisation has a written conflict of interest policy, whether it has been through an audit in the past 24 months and whether it has operational accounting and procurement systems. The application form is provided in the annexes.

The application form used by the **Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders** asks applicants to include a brief description of the security management practices (ensuring the security of employees, partners, and activities) used by the organisation.

III. Type of capacity development activities

Capacity building covers all aspects and stages of the FSTP process: projects preparation, procurement, monitoring and evaluation, human resources, financial, institutional development etc.

Implementing partners indicated they used a mix of capacity building tools such as:

- Info-sessions
- The provision of detailed feedback to applicants allowing for future improvements
- One-off or a series of trainings (both standardised and on-demand)
- Coaching (both pre-defined and on-demand)
- Mentoring
- Fellowships and traineeships

Info-sessions

Several implementing partners indicated they organise info-sessions ahead of the FSTP calls for proposals. Similar to the info-sessions organised by the EU, these are meant to clarify as many aspects as possible relating to the objectives, requirements, type of support offered, etc associated with the call. Info-sessions tend to rely more on a one-way communication approach (i.e., from the implementing partner to FSTP applicants) compared to trainings (which are more interactive in nature and allow for more exchanges both ways). These info-sessions can still be an important opportunity for unexperienced civil society actors to learn about the process and the key requirements for funding.

Provision of detailed feedback on submitted proposals

Following the assessment of received proposals, several implementing partners send very detailed feedback to applicants or organise feedback sessions. This approach does not only improve transparency and increases community trust, but it also becomes an alternative capacity building tool: detailed feedback becomes the basis for improvement of future project proposals.

Trainings

Trainings remain a common capacity building tool, although they are increasingly linked to other capacity building components, such as coaching and mentoring. As is the case for other tools, trainings are used at different stages of the FSTP process:

- Trainings can be used at the submission stage to ensure applicants develop proposals that are of better quality and respond better to local needs. In some cases, certain trainings become a mandatory part of the selection process.
- In order to reduce the risk of organisations managing FSTP, many implementing partners organise trainings on project and financial management.
- During the implementation stage, trainings can cover thematic issues (such as environmental policies or gender issues), as well as different methods for achieving the desired impact (advocacy campaigns, awareness raising, service provision, etc.)
- Implementing partners tend to integrate trainings on the monitoring and reporting of results in all stages of FSTP implementation.



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Using trainings as a capacity building tool

fAKT Montenegro also organises trainings before the submission of applications. The trainings can be mandatory and become part of the preselection process: only those having participated in the capacity building training programme are invited to apply with a project proposal.

The Women Media & Development Association - TAM initiates capacity building by organising proposal writing trainings. In many cases, attending the capacity building training prior to the call proved to be an advantage during the selection process.

The **Human Rights House Foundation** organises practical trainings on project and financial management, bringing together project and financial staff. The trainings proved to be a very successful tool for building the internal capacity of their partners.

Coaching and mentoring

Among the capacity building tools mentioned above, there is special importance given to coaching and mentoring. Coaching tends to be viewed as more task-oriented, skills-focused, directed and time-bound, whereas mentoring is more focused on open-ended personal development. The two approaches complement each other and bridge the gap between theory and practice. In some cases, staff members of the organisations managing FSTP are directly involved as mentors and coaches either on their own or with the support of external experts in “mixed” teams.

Coaching is often a reaction to the specific needs of FSTP beneficiaries, ranging from writing the project proposal, organisational and institutional development to opening a bank account and financial planning and reporting.

- **Coaching in the pre-selection or pre-implementation phase:** Implementing partners mentioned many types of coaching at this stage: two-phase calls with face-to-face meetings in between to improve the application or coaching before the deadline (especially for community-based organisations) in writing proposals. This also includes work on improving the proposed budget, for example by ensuring that the FSTP beneficiary has dedicated enough resources to ensure proper financial management (e.g., adequate HR or software for accounting). This kind of assistance enhances the capacity of FSTP beneficiaries to successfully manage any support received, as well as improve their capacity to manage any other donor-funded projects in the future. Experience shows that any type of capacity building prior to the call helps FSTP applicants, as well as increases the likelihood of getting proposals more aligned with the objectives of the organisation managing the FSTP.



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Coaching at the pre-selection stage

In contrast to some implementing partners, the **European Endowment for Democracy** is not restricted to assess applications as submitted but can support applicants in their applications and provide feedback throughout the process. Consequently, pre-award coaching, which follows the submission of the initial application, represents a significant component of non-grant support provided to prospective beneficiaries. This type of support involves EED Secretariat and country consultants who know the local language and local reality of CSOs and can help applicants reshape and reformulate proposals, guiding them through donor requirements. Local consultants can also check whether an application includes all the elements it needs for the applicant to manage the initiative successfully. Such capacity building support is appreciated by organisations concerned even when they are not ultimately awarded a grant, as it provides knowledge and experience in dealing with donors.

CARE Egypt relies on a pre-selection by the Evaluation Committee of received project ideas, followed by proposal writing workshops and several technical support sessions. This allows project ideas to be further developed into full and sound proposals.

The Kosovar Civil Society Foundation uses direct coaching to improve and refine proposals following selection by the Evaluation Committee and before signing the contract. Improvements can relate to the activity plans, logframes, budgets, and are based on specific conditions and/or comments made by the Evaluation Committee.

- **Coaching during implementation:** For some of the small organisations, the FSTP funding may constitute some of their first financial transactions. Some of them may not have an accountant, a bookkeeping system or software. Making them aware of and giving them access to basic accounting tools or ensuring they have a system in place for tracking and reporting expenses will build their organisational capacities in the long-term and reduce the risk of ineligible expenses. Financial management is just one area

in which coaching is used. Most implementing partners indicated that they provide regular coaching to beneficiaries throughout the implementation of the FSTP – either on demand, or as part of a comprehensive capacity building plan agreed jointly with the beneficiary. This coaching can relate to concrete questions regarding the implementation of FSTP (i.e., advocacy strategies, financial management) or can occur on a regular basis, e.g., to take stock and assess future needs and steps for organisational development.

Most implementing partners indicated that they provide regular coaching to beneficiaries throughout the implementation of the FSTP.



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Coaching at the implementation stage

In order to build the capacity of grassroots organisations in advancing the EU agenda, the **Belgrade Open School** involves relevant thematic field experts (e.g., on environment and education). It also offers support during the implementation of EU projects and encourages local organisations to apply directly for EU funding.

The capacity building approach of the **Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders** seeks to respond to the needs of organisations operating in difficult environments, often under threat. Considering that the majority of its members had to relocate for security reasons, capacity building sometimes included the development of contingency strategies, and support to the structure and functioning of CBOs. Improving their relations and connections with other actors in the field, as well as with international organisations (e.g., Amnesty International) constitutes their long-term capacity building approach.

The **European Endowment for Democracy** staff and country consultants provide tailored assistance to beneficiaries at the implementation stage on issues related to project management, monitoring, networking, narrative, and financial reporting (especially for first time beneficiaries). This is done with a view to building the internal organisational capacity of the supported organisations as well as enabling the grantee to be in a position to successfully apply for and implement other donor grants, thus helping its sustainability. EED also provides technical assistance to beneficiaries through contracted experts (budgeted in the grant or covered directly by EED) supporting them in developing better internal policies, processes, and documents (for example, guidelines, manuals, strategies, as well as specific internal policies).

Mentoring is a learning relationship, generally focused on long term career development or organisational development. The primary purpose is to drive personal or organisational growth: building skills, knowledge and understanding. Mentors may use coaching skills in their conversations, but usually the mentor role is wider than that of a coach and may include making connections and sharing experiences. Coaching is primarily focused on assisting organisations with their current performance. Coaching seeks to enable organisations to “get fit” for their current mandate and roles, or perhaps prepare them for a changing environment.

In total 16% of those participating in the collaborative process stated in the Mentimeter survey that they provided in-house mentoring to help grassroots activists and organisations address real-life issues. As mentoring generally refers to one-on-one personalised support, it provided hands-on experience to FSTP beneficiaries and enhanced trust between the two parties involved.

- **Peer-to-peer mentoring** is a common form of mentoring, allowing those involved to share experience and collaborate on tackling different situations in the field, working with beneficiaries, etc. This type of exchange can help organisations support each other and develop a relationship of trust. Peer-to-peer mentoring ensures more collaboration, enhances networks and might be more sustainable over time. Peer CSOs are more likely to join forces in future actions/projects. However, this type of mentoring requires preparatory work for the identification of the most suitable peers.
- **Mentoring by external experts** involves longer-term support from local or international experts, not necessarily representing other civil society organisations, but with a good understanding of how certain organisational processes can be improved.

- **Institutional mentoring coupled with core grants.** This approach is built around two pillars: an interrelated grant component and a mentoring programme. The provision of core grants to local CSOs is complemented by a one-on-one mentoring programme. This differs from thematic,

tailored, or institutional coaching. Requiring the engagement of full-time mentors, the approach tends to be more extensive and takes longer. The mentoring aims to support organisations apply skills, knowledge, and experience to new situations and processes.



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Mentoring

Equal Rights & Independent Media (ERIM, formerly known as IREX Europe) integrates advocacy training at the pre-implementation stage in order to support FSTP beneficiaries in implementation of their advocacy campaigns. The training is used to clarify more general aspects such as the terminology, steps, and process in an advocacy campaign. This is then complemented by the involvement of external mentors who support CSOs or initiative groups with the actual implementation of specific campaigns. External mentors can provide recommendations on how to improve implementation or adopt corrective measures in order to achieve the desired impact.

The European Endowment for Democracy organises ad hoc peer-learning workshops for its beneficiaries allowing them to discuss best practices, challenges, and opportunities on a common topic. For instance, in a workshop in Turkey EED beneficiaries discussed informally and constructively how to overcome challenges in the institutionalisation process of nascent organisations or why data collection and archiving are important elements of CSOs work. An added value of this process is the building of community and new networks. In another country, at the request of beneficiaries, EED provided technical assistance allowing smaller media outlets to get together and perform a SWOT analysis of each other’s projects, with the view to identifying how they can better cooperate with one another. Some content sharing resulted from that.

Unlike coaching, due to its longer-term approach, mentoring is more conducive to creating a long-lasting support base and network beneficiaries can utilise and rely on according to their needs.

CASE STUDY

One-on-one Mentoring

The Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders developed an approach in supporting local organisations in volatile situations which is built around the following main pillars:

- **Maintaining and enlarging the support base for CSOs** through collaboration with a variety of other local actors at national, regional, and international level. Being funded by a network of over eighty organisations in the Middle East and North Africa, EMHRF acquired experience on how to connect local beneficiaries with each other. EMHRF uses its access to this network of trusted partners, contacts, and former beneficiaries to expand the participation and mobilisation of other local, regional, and international actors and organisations, such as lawyers, doctors, diaspora organisations, international solidarity networks, etc., and donors. These efforts aim to expand local protection networks and to “break” the isolation of local civil society actors operating in the most difficult contexts.
- **Providing hands-on advice** in particular to emerging groups in the Middle East and North Africa. Many of these actors are operating in remote areas, which can create challenges for mentoring programmes. Mentoring can start with the involvement of mentors in refining project ideas together with beneficiaries, sometimes even on the phone, during the application process. The process also includes the development of contingency planning for CSOs at risk, providing advice on budgeting and organising relevant technical trainings such as on digital security, security planning, etc. In a context like Egypt, where the majority of members have had to relocate for security reasons to different countries, one-to-one mentoring includes hands-on advice on how to maintain a structured and functional organisation when the majority of its members are geographically dispersed. External advisors can help with setting up a functional structure.

As mentoring generally refers to one-on-one personalised support, it provided hands-on experience to FSTP beneficiaries and enhanced trust between the two parties involved.

Fellowships and traineeships

Traineeships generally consist of skills development programmes that include a work placement and last for a limited period of time (as a rule, they can last from 6 weeks up to 1 year, though most traineeships are less than 6 months in duration). **Fellowships** usually focus on professional development and/or academic research, rather than professional experience and do not necessarily include work placements. Fellows are often required to propose the focus of their fellowship during the application period. These self-designed projects then allow fellows to further an academic or professional goal. Fellowships focus on building relevant knowledge or experience in the field. Fellowships are not specifically designed to provide entry-level work experience.



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Traineeships and Fellowships

The Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders includes traineeships and fellowships in its capacity development programme: EMHRF aims to support young emerging organisations and leaders, providing them with the opportunity to enrol in short and medium-term traineeships and fellowships. Traineeship and fellowship programmes encourage professional connections and peer-to-peer exchanges, but also contribute to enabling young generations to engage in civil society activism.

The **Eastern Partnership Civil Society Fellowship Programme** aims to identify young ambitious, forward-thinking civil society activists from the EaP region and support the development of their leadership skills, as well as allow them to bring about positive change in their communities by providing them with resources for targeted activities. In 2017-2020, fellows received up to 5,000 EUR to develop their own activities, under the supervision of a mentor or within a certain civil society organisation in the European Union or the EaP region. Examples of projects included: an audit of public transport and accessibility issues, advocacy against financial crimes, improving the quality of local playgrounds, e-democracy, etc. The Fellowship programme was implemented in the context of an EU-funded technical assistance project (the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility) and not in the context of an EU-funded grant, however, it may also serve as an example for civil society organisations implementing FSTP.

Using a Mixed Approach

While the different types of capacity building tools mentioned above serve specific functions, it is not beneficial to clearly define each tool independently. There is sometimes a fine line

separating some of them (as is the case with coaching and mentoring), additionally, most capacity building programmes tend to have a mix of different tools, all aiming to contribute to the same objective.

CASE STUDY**Mixing Different Capacity Building Tools**

The Centre for Environment, Bosnia and Herzegovina aims to contribute to the improvement of the environment by influencing relevant public policies and raising public awareness about environmental issues.

The Centre cooperates with other associations, networks, institutions, and international organisations. The Eko BiH project aims to build the capacities of informal environmental CSO networks and grassroots organisations, focusing on strategic planning, encouraging cooperation, exchange of experiences, and the pooling of resources for common actions at local level on environmental and climate protection, water, and nature protection legislation.

The Centre applied a step-by-step approach in building the capacities of network members. The Centre conducted a needs assessment, followed by the development of strategic/local action plans by targeted organisations. A call for concept notes

was organised among member organisations. Out of 14 organisations, 10 submitted acceptable concept notes. Those organisations attended a training in project cycle management and had two days to revise their proposals. Eight organisations were invited to the next training cycle, which included monitoring and evaluation of the proposed activities and their impact on the local level, as well as two days training in the administration of projects and reporting. Following the different training cycles, seven organisations signed contracts. The Centre conducted a mentoring programme throughout the implementation of the FSTP grant, which included regular visits, and ad-hoc support to the organisations on the implementation of the grant. Support was also provided in finding co-funding for grants, by helping organisations build partnership with other donors, local authorities and organisations working in similar areas. This systematic approach towards capacity building for local and grassroots organisations is seen by the Centre as the main achievement of FSTP at the local level.

Most capacity building programmes tend to have a mix of different tools, all aiming to contribute to the same objective.

IV. Assessing the impact of capacity development programmes

Organisations allocate significant resources and dedicate a lot of time to developing the capacity of their FSTP beneficiaries, but how can one know capacity was indeed improved? How can one assess the impact of these interventions? Measuring the success of capacity development is a very complex issue and many publications were dedicated to this subject alone.

One of the challenges in measuring the success of capacity development lies in the difficulty of evaluating behavioural change in general. As there are no standard units for capacity development, we are generally left with making a judgment on whether an improvement in a particular area implies an increase in the ability of the organisation to fulfil its mission¹⁹. In addition, there might be a delay between the time that a capacity development intervention happens and the time when the organisation internalises that intervention and learns to perform effectively at a higher level²⁰. Discussions during the collaborative process confirmed that it takes time to see the impact of capacity development in the country and community context.

The DG NEAR Guidance Note on “Addressing capacity development in planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation”²¹

(2017) raises another important point about the assessment of capacity development interventions: “Performance is not capacity. The capacity development process must be assessed from within the institution and its system, through outcome indicators that are general and flexible enough to allow for an understanding of achievements that were not pre-determined and occurred throughout the process itself.”

Capacity development activities that focus on individuals, such as trainings, for example, or creating shared experiences among members of a team (e.g., strategic planning, board development) lose their effectiveness when trained staff leave for another job. On the other hand, system-focused efforts may also fail. For example, where efforts have been made in creating new policies, procedures, job descriptions, and other hard systems these have limited influence on what employees actually do. When measuring the effectiveness of capacity development, we have to look at people, systems, and how they relate to and reinforce each other²².

However, as hard as it may be to fully assess the impact of capacity development programmes, both donors and implementing partners use a number of tools to get at least an indication of what changed in the CD process. Some of the

most common tools are **focus groups**, **perception surveys** and **interviews** with beneficiaries. All of these tools seek to gather and analyse information on what beneficiaries themselves consider has changed in their skills, behaviour, or organisations. Tools based on what beneficiaries’ state face several limitations, perhaps one of the most important being the reluctance of beneficiaries to give negative comments about the support they received out of fear of compromising the relationship with the donor or because it could also be perceived as failure on their side. Respondents are generally asked to speak about their perceptions of change without having any pre-arranged reference point or model construct to refer to. This further complicates the analysis.

Despite all these methodological difficulties, discussions during the collaborative process showed there are certain indications that capacity development programmes contributed to positive changes.

- According to the experience of implementing partners, one observed impact of capacity development efforts was that FSTP beneficiaries were becoming **more confident and successful in their fundraising** (measured by monitoring which other support/funding from other donors they

¹⁹ Kennard T. Wing “Assessing the Effectiveness of Capacity-Building Initiatives: Seven Issues for the Field”: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0899764003261518>

²⁰ Idem.

²¹ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/dg_near_guidance_note_-_addressing_capacity_development_in_programming_me.pdf

²² Kennard T. Wing “Assessing the Effectiveness of Capacity-Building Initiatives: Seven Issues for the Field”: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0899764003261518>

received after the capacity development programme was over). FSTP beneficiaries demonstrated a better understanding of how to approach donors and of administrative requirements, and, in the process of capacity development, acquired a clearer vision of their mandate and the scope of their work. For some organisations, being FSTP recipients acted as a first necessary and preparatory step for applying to and obtaining more significant EU funding.

- There are also indications that capacity development efforts contributed to creating **connections between local partners and other actors** implementing similar work at national, regional, and international levels, enabling exchanges of experience and joint activities. For example, for organisations working in remote regions, being part of a capacity development programme may lead them to decide to join larger coalitions at national level.
- Combining core support with capacity development (project preparation, understanding donor requirements, communication/campaigning, crowdfunding support) enabled smaller CSOs to improve **their links with citizens** and **enlarge their constituencies**.
- Capacity development programmes also contributed to improving the **thematic / technical expertise of FSTP beneficiaries**, exposing them to new knowledge and field experts and improving their policy, advocacy, and awareness-raising work.

Discussions during the collaborative process showed there are certain indications that capacity development programmes contributed to positive changes.

Capacity Development: Checklist

If implementing partners intend to contribute to the capacity development of their FSTP beneficiaries, they should reflect on:

- Capacity development strategy > The **overall capacity development strategy** for their FSTP recipients (its aim, principles, capacity assessment tools, type of capacity development activities, how to monitor and evaluate the success of the proposed strategy, etc.)

- FSTP beneficiaries involvement > To which **degree FSTP beneficiaries** can/should be involved in defining their needs and the overall capacity development approach: participatory approaches have emerged as the most successful during the collaborative process

- Capacity development needs assessment > How to **assess beneficiaries' capacity development needs**: several tools are included as examples in the annex of this publication but implementing partners may decide to develop a dedicated, customized capacity assessment tool better suited for their mandate and / or beneficiaries.

- Capacity development activities > Selecting which **type of capacity development activities** to provide, choosing the right mix of activities at different stages of the FSTP process (info-sessions, trainings, coaching and mentoring, fellowships, and traineeships).

- Assessing the impact of capacity development > How to **assess the impact of capacity development** activities: focus groups, perception surveys, interviews, as well as other approaches may be used for this purpose.

Chapter IV:

Civil Society Practices in the Implementation of FSTP: Monitoring, Reporting and Communicating Results

The last topics addressed during the collaborative process were monitoring, reporting, and communicating the results of FSTP to the wider public.

Monitoring and evaluation:

- Provide information on what an intervention is doing, how well it is performing and whether it is achieving its aims and objectives;
- Guide future intervention activities;
- Constitute an important part of accountability to donors and stakeholders.

According to the OECD, **monitoring**²³ uses a systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide the main stakeholders of an on-going intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds. In other words, it shows whether things are going according to plan and helps those involved to identify and solve problems quickly. It keeps a record of project inputs and outputs such as:

- activities;

- reporting and documentation;
- finances and budgets;
- supplies and equipment.

Monitoring is an **ongoing activity** that should be incorporated into everyday project work.

An **evaluation** asks whether a project is achieving what it set out to do, and whether it is making a difference. If this is happening the evaluation seeks to understand how and why the intervention has worked so well. If the project is unsuccessful, questions are raised as to what could have been done better or differently. Evaluations thus keep track of key outcomes and impacts related to the different project components, assessing whether the objectives, aims and goals are being achieved. Evaluations **take place at specific times** during interventions. It is common to start with baseline research near the beginning of an intervention so as to obtain information with which subsequent changes can be compared. In the context of EU-funded projects, evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of on-going or

completed interventions, their design, implementation and results according to the following criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, coherence, and EU added-value. An evaluation assesses how well a specific measure has worked (or is working) and whether it is still justified or if it should be changed.

Monitoring and evaluation allow donors to take **preventive and corrective actions** where needed, to **learn from past experience** and to **ensure accountability** towards stakeholders and the general public and as such are vital elements of sound operational and financial management.

Organisations employ a mix of **qualitative and quantitative methodologies** such as desk research, site visits, interviews and focus groups, communication, and triangulation of information with other donors. Many implementing partners have developed their own **customised monitoring & evaluation frameworks** which also form the basis for their assessment of FSTP performance. Implementing partners often support FSTP beneficiaries with their own monitoring and reporting, including by providing support with the design and implementation of M&E frameworks and developing beneficiaries' capacities to plan, monitor, evaluate and learn.

²³ As per DG NEAR's Guidance Note on "Addressing Capacity Development in Planning / Programming, Monitoring and Evaluation" which is available here: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/default/files/dg_near_guidance_note_-_addressing_capacity_development_in_programming_me.pdf

Focus on What Matters



Listen to Understand



Contribute Your Thinking



Link and Connect Ideas



Listen Together for Deeper Insights & Questions



Harvest Ideas



16 October 2020

Financial Support to Third Parties

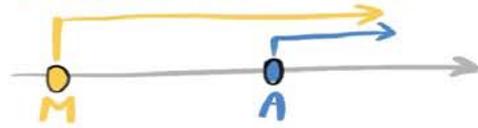
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WORLD CAFE principles

MONITORING & REPORTING

NARRATIVE monitoring & reporting

monitoring starts even BEFORE APPLICATION

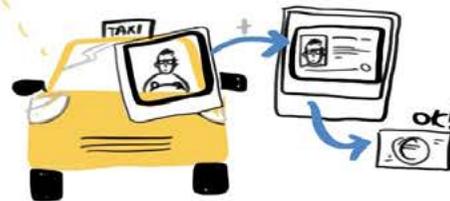


PARTICIPATORY APPROACH through whole process!

avoid jargon.

FINANCIAL monitoring & reporting

two standard TEMPLATES!



TRUST from both sides

COMMUNICATING & VISIBILITY

only (well-mostly) encrypted apps

not using names

3 levels of visibility requirements

CASE STUDY



A Customised Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Approach

The **European Endowment for Democracy** developed and utilises a tailor-made Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) approach. The MEL system ensures that from the assessment of requests for support to the closure of grants, a constant flow of MEL information is generated and used.

The information MEL provides on implementation progress and results achieved is used to:

- inform strategic decision-making processes and operational practice, and help optimise EED's ability to respond effectively to emerging changes (opportunities or threats);
- account for the resources used and the progress made to EED's stakeholders (e.g., members of the Board of Governors and donors).
- The MEL approach is tailored to key features of EED's objectives and operations. EED follows an adaptive, results-oriented, approach to democracy assistance. It involves experimentation, learning-by-doing, and having the flexibility to adapt the assistance provided, based on changes in the environments in which EED operates and evolving insights into what type of activities work and under which circumstances. The MEL system is, therefore, also results-oriented, context-sensitive, and flexible. EED collects rich, quantitative, and qualitative data, to capture a) both intended and unintended results achieved and b) information on what has worked well, and what has not worked well, and under what circumstances. The MEL system inspires beneficiaries to be results-oriented, responsive to changing circumstances, to ex-

periment, and learn. EED also intends to minimise the burden the MEL system places on EED's beneficiaries in terms of data collection and reporting requirements. Narrative and financial reports are simple and focused on collecting only the data that is essential for the beneficiaries and EED to assess the results achieved, learn lessons, monitor risks and cross-cutting issues, and ensure that the money spent is properly accounted for. For each grant, a specific, tailored, monitoring plan is developed which includes a description of envisaged results, key activities, specific criteria of success (indicators & targets), baseline information, and monitoring methods and sources. These plans form the foundation of the monitoring of individual grants. Every 4-6 months, beneficiaries are to submit narrative and financial reports to report on the progress made and expenditure. As well as being used for obtaining progress information, the narrative reports are also used to foster beneficiaries' focus on results and learning and when relevant- to build beneficiaries' reporting capacity (through the provision of feedback on the narrative reports). The narrative reports are focused on results (instead of being mainly focused on describing activities). At the closure-phase of a grant, a Final Assessment Report is produced by EED. These Final Assessment Reports are analysed by using a qualitative analysis software tool (NVivo), which facilitates the process of synthesizing results information and analysing grants' contribution to the results as identified in EED's Results-Based Framework (please see for more information, the case study: Making Better Use of Qualitative Data).

Reporting refers to providing information, generally in a structured pre-defined manner (i.e., using templates) to implementing partners or donors. Based on donor requirements and the M&E frameworks used by different actors, **narrative reports** generally include information on the activities, outputs, results, and outcomes of different interventions. **Financial reports** include information on expenses related to those activities. In the context of FSTP, reporting can refer to both the reporting of the implementing partner to the donor, as well as the reporting of FSTP beneficiaries to the implementing partner. One of the biggest difficulties faced by implementing partners is to aggregate the reporting information of FSTP beneficiaries in a meaningful way and use this aggregation as a basis for their final donor reporting. Donor reporting is not only an important administrative requirement needed to ensure expenses are incurred according to donor agreements, but also a crucial accountability and communication tool. The wider public should be made aware of the results and achievements of EU-funded initiatives, including their FSTP components, in order to strengthen the role, visibility and credibility of CSOs, and demonstrate the EU's (or other donor's) commitment in supporting democratic values and societies and better outcomes for citizens.

CASE STUDY



A MEAL System Using a Variety of MEAL Tools

To track project performance, test project assumptions, and make real-time adjustments, People in Need's **MEAL system** relies on the following tools:

- **MEAL Plan** – a narrative report developed during the inception phase for defining all relevant monitoring and evaluation activities.
- **Results Framework** expanding the project's logical framework, clarifying the methods and frequency of measurement for each of the indicators, as well as the roles and responsibilities of each team member in collecting, analysing and disseminating the data.
- **An Indicator Tracking Table** which contains all of the project's indicators, at all levels and is updated regularly.
- **Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCAT)** – a self-assessment process that repeats every six and 12 months, yielding qualitative data for both PIN and participants themselves.
- An **M&E questionnaire** – used for quantitative baseline and endline data collection at the beginning and at the end of a participant's engagement with the project. An example is included in the annexes of this document.
- **Participant Feedback** – PIN relies on feedback forms and sessions after each activity, as well as monthly participant meetings in each country and online tools (such as Facebook groups, shared folders) for exchange between participants. Participants are in direct contact with PIN's country coordinators and frequently share questions and suggestions for improvement – this is enabled by a horizontal, feedback and learning-oriented culture within the project.
- **Participant Reports** – core and campaign grants are tied to milestones that are linked to project outcome and output indicators. Participant reports serve as a source of data as well as accountability.
- **Facilitator Feedback** – facilitators take part in coordination meetings before and after each activity; give written feedback on participants' progress, issues and concerns; and provide input to the design of tools and follow-up activities.
- **Independent monitoring and participatory field-based monitoring** – This can be done online or through in-person monitoring visits by PIN's MEAL and programme teams. An example is included in the annexes of this document.
- **Community Feedback and Response Mechanism (CFRM)** – in place for allowing participants, community members and relevant stakeholders to provide feedback and complaints on what we do and how we do our work, as a fundamental part of PIN's accountability towards all relevant parties.
- **Internal Mid-term Evaluation** conducted by a PIN staff from HQ with relevant expertise, for all projects with a duration of at least 24 months, aimed to assess the progress towards the project's objectives to date, and to produce recommendations for the remaining period of implementation.
- **Final project evaluations** conducted by an external consultant to provide an independent assessment of achievement of each project's objectives, make a judgement on how intended or unintended, positive or negative changes came about, assess the levels of attribution, and the level of participation of the target groups.

I. Narrative monitoring and reporting

The following practices emerged from the collaborative process with implementing partners:

- A monitoring and reporting mechanism should be **foreseen at the design phase**. Designing the project together with beneficiaries and setting up the **monitoring process** from the start will make proper monitoring and reporting more achievable once FSTP starts. Collecting baseline data on the beneficiary's capacity development and knowledge also needs to happen at the design stage.
- **Collecting information on impact:** Blended approaches (quantitative and qualitative) are often used to collect information on impact. It is important to understand how the support provided contributes to the capacities of supported organisations: tracking changes in organisational capacity are crucial in this respect. A key question is how to aggregate the **qualitative data** of different FSTP beneficiaries which may not be structured in the same way and may be "buried in narrative reports".



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Making Better Use of Qualitative Data

The **European Endowment for Democracy** works with a high number of beneficiaries, with different levels of capacity and ability to report on their results. One of the guiding principles of the EED is to minimize the burden placed on beneficiaries in terms of data collection and reporting requirements. Noticing that a lot of useful information is hidden in beneficiaries' narrative reports, the EED decided to introduce so-called Final Assessment Reports and use NVivo to make better use of the data collected, without adding any new burden on beneficiaries. NVivo²⁴ is a qualitative data analysis computer software package that helps qualitative researchers to organise, analyse and find insights in unstructured or qualitative data such as interviews, open-ended survey responses, journal articles, social media and web content, where deep levels of analysis on small or large volumes of data are required. The EED uses it to analyse, synthesise, and aggregate results- and details around lessons learnt. At the closure-phase of a grant, a Final Assessment Report (FARs) is produced by EED. This report captures, among other things, the key results achieved, the key outcome of the EED Results-Based Framework the grant contributed to, lessons learned, and the grantee's most significant change story. The FARs are analysed and coded with NVivo. By categorizing and coding and the results accumulated through NVivo, EED can link individual grants to the overall EED Results-Based framework and synthesise results information. It, furthermore, allows EED to detect patterns, test assumptions, and learn about what works well, what doesn't work, and in what context. Results and lessons learned can be analysed and extracted per country, theme, type of support, and other characteristics. For example, lessons learnt from all media-relevant grants, or key results achieved with a specific type of support. The data is uploaded to NVivo by the M&E unit at the EED in order to ensure a coherent approach.

²⁴ <https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/home>

Analysing and synthesizing qualitative data may be extremely important for organisations with high numbers of beneficiaries of FSTP.

- **Capacity development support for monitoring, evaluation and reporting:** Implementing partners shared a number of approaches to strengthen the monitoring and reporting capacities of FSTP beneficiaries. Different activities involving FSTP beneficiaries can contribute to sound management, transparency, and accountability. These include being present in the community by holding focus groups with the constituency to better understand their needs, organising regular progress meetings with FSTP beneficiaries, providing support in identifying and writing success stories, etc. Setting-up peer support mechanisms for beneficiaries can also be effective. All these are likely to increase the impact and success of the overall FSTP scheme. Several organisations are providing monitoring and reporting coaching to FSTP beneficiaries in order to make them aware of and better prepared for the tools to be used during implementation.
- **Participatory approaches** in monitoring and evaluation should be encouraged through FSTP.
- **Narrative reports** should make conclusions on the achievements and impact of the project/intervention as well as lessons learnt which should be taken into account when designing future projects. In their **reporting to the donors on FSTP**, implementing partners should include elements such as information on award procedures, the type of recipients of FSTP, evaluation of results achieved, and the impact, i.e., the positive and negative changes produced by the intervention. Implementing partners should aim to cover as many of the points which were initially included in their proposal on FSTP.

- When it comes to the **reporting carried out by FSTP beneficiaries**, the experience of implementing partners shows that narrative reporting should be **simplified and tailor-made** to take into account the beneficiaries' capacities, focusing on results, success stories and impact. Rather than describing activities, FSTP beneficiaries should be encouraged to reflect on the most significant change they

were able to achieve and to capture the story of change, if possible. Reporting in **local languages** should be accepted when FSTP beneficiaries are organisations with limited capacities. Reporting templates should clarify to beneficiaries what they need to report on, while being simple and tailor-made to consider the specificities/capacities of beneficiaries.



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Community-based monitoring systems

CARE Egypt supports dozens of poverty-fighting programmes around the world. CARE Egypt used a community-based monitoring system, which involved monitoring carried out by preselected partner youth organisations who were trained for social accountability. The Governance Programming Framework, based on empowering citizens, accountable and effective public authorities, and other power holders (including CSOs providing services) included a big sub-granting scheme with 120 micro-projects, in parallel to 10 grants to 10 local youth CSOs to empower and train 200 youth in order to monitor the 120 micro-projects. The methodology included: input tracking (data collection & analysis) followed by participatory assessment through field visits, sharing findings through review meetings and corrective action if necessary. Public hearings were organised to discuss corrective measures. Two hundred young people were trained in monitoring, soft-skills and reporting, etc. In this context, it was crucial to make sure that the monitored micro-projects were well aware of this community-based monitoring model. The objective was to empower youth and community members to know their rights and claim quality services. The monitoring of micro-projects also enabled them to detect fraud.

II. Financial monitoring and reporting

Before providing more information about the practices of implementing partners, it is important to start with a reminder on the reporting requirements related to FSTP, as per the General Conditions and PRAG provisions.

Reminder: Requirements for implementing partners in reporting on FSTP

*According to the General Conditions, Coordinators shall provide in their report to the contracting authority a **comprehensive and detailed report on the award and implementation of any financial support given.** The content of the report should include information on the award procedures, the identification of recipients of financial support, the amount granted, results achieved, problems encountered, solutions found, activities carried out, as well as a timetable of activities which still need to be carried out (Art. 10.8 General Conditions).*

If the Guidelines for Applicants are demanding it explicitly, applicants shall list the documents kept by third parties to demonstrate that the financial support has been used in accordance with the grant contract (6.9.2. PRAG).

The implementing partners have certain **flexibility** to define **what type of supporting documents the FSTP beneficiaries need to submit**, such as receipts or reports. The implementing partners are allowed to propose to the Contracting Authority which documents are considered essential, as well as who will keep them. Auditors will turn solely to the implementing partner for proof and documentation, not the FSTP beneficiary.

According to a Mentimeter survey among implementing partners, the following supporting documents are collected from FSTP beneficiaries:

- Input-based supporting documents to justify all expenditures - 14%
- Output-based supporting documents to prove that the activities were implemented, and outputs produced as agreed - 14%
- Combination of input and-output-based supporting documents - 71%
- Other 0%

The following practices emerged from the collaborative process with implementing partners:

- **Input-based versus output-based reporting:** Implementing partners emphasised the challenges of financial reporting. A mix of input-based and output-based reporting is the most common practice, as can also be seen from

the Mentimeter survey above. For smaller projects or CSOs with less capacity, FSTP implementers tend to focus more on output-based reporting, on the basis of pre-agreed deliverables/milestones.

- **Output-based reporting** is allowed by the EU to the extent that there is no need for proof of expenses but rather for documents proving that the activity has taken place in accordance with what was required, and the related outputs were produced²⁵.
- In **extremely difficult situations**, such as support to migrants or refugees, as a minimum the donor may require proof that the respective person actually received the funds. The details of all these situations and cases have to be foreseen in implementing partners' grant proposal, followed by the grant agreement, and in the design of the FSTP Call for Proposals, which will be the starting point of collecting the supporting documentation for financial reports. Some calls for proposals for FSTP foresee mandatory financial documentation.
- **Templates** should be adapted to the capacities of FSTP beneficiaries (for example, accepting simplified budgets).
- **Coaching on financial issues** is much needed, including on good accounting practices, in order to reduce the financial risk of the FSTP implementing partner and reduce the burden of beneficiaries. Some organisations require "hand-holding" throughout the process but mitigating major risks requires a lot of administrative capacity on the side of the implement-

²⁵ See INTPA Companion Chapter 19.2.10.3, Article 10(7).

ing partner. The implementing partner may need to describe in the Description of the Action submitted to the donor why “hand-holding” is important and propose an appropriate resource allocation for this labour-intensive process.

- As in the case of narrative reporting, **constant communication and field presence** of the implementing partner are very important to ensure a successful FSTP mechanism. Situations in which the implementing partner decides to withhold installments before financial reporting is concluded can create serious financial difficulties for FSTP beneficiaries with limited cashflow. In general, implementing partners indicated they aim to avoid this, taking the financial risk on behalf of their beneficiaries.
- As stressful as it may sometimes appear to all parties involved, financial monitoring and reporting can act as a **mutual learning experience**. The FSTP beneficiaries usually have many questions, doubts, and fears about the FSTP process. Working with implementing partners on application forms, financial forms, budget breakdowns, reports, receipts, etc. puts beneficiaries at ease and enhances their capacity to manage financial issues in the future.
- **Establishing trust** between the FSTP implementing partner and FSTP recipients is at the core of a successful cooperation and is even more important in difficult environments. Implementing partners highlighted that requesting or questioning the supporting documents submitted by people at risk would be inappropriate. Both donors and implementing partners need to have an understanding of the difficulties (sometimes life-threatening situations) the FSTP beneficiaries might be facing. For implementing partners this may mean accepting a higher financial risk. For the donor, it may mean accepting alternative verification means (such as declarations from beneficiaries or implementing partners on why certain supporting docu-



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Using Output-based Contracts

Equal Rights & Independent Media (ERIM, formerly known as IREX Europe), **the Human Rights House Foundation, the Human Rights House Tbilisi, Human Rights House Yerevan and the Black Sea Trust** partnered for the development and implementation of the “COVID-19: Civil Society Resilience and Sustainability” project.

In order to mitigate the immediate and longer-term impact of COVID-19, the project supports civil society and the broader independent activist community to continue to provide access to protection and assistance to the most vulnerable groups, as well as provide accurate information about the pandemic. Support is provided in the form of small emergency grants to support CSOs with the necessary digital technology, structured organisational and strategic capacity to continue supporting their beneficiaries, protecting vulnerable communities and advocating for policies to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

Implementing partners are using output-based contracts (for up to €25.000). Contracts indicate the duration, scope of work, payment schedule, agreed milestones, deliverables, and sources (i.e., links to information/articles posted on websites/social media, reports/analyses of social media channels/audience, etc.).

Beneficiaries receive a first advance payment of 70%, followed by a second payment solely upon achievement of the agreed milestones. The milestones and deliverables were agreed through a collaborative process between the implementing partner and beneficiary.

For outputs-based contracts, the application form, contract, and reporting need to be carefully aligned. If milestones are agreed without the necessary time for reflection and consensus, they may not be reached by FSTP beneficiaries, putting them in financial difficulty. In case of unforeseen events, any re-definition of milestones would need to be carefully assessed in dialogue with beneficiaries, ensuring that these remain realistic.

ments may be missing). Where there is real trust between beneficiaries and the implementing partners, beneficiaries are more likely to be transparent about the issues they are facing. This increases the chances of taking timely measures and contributes to reducing the financial risk of the implementing partners. There is always a need to find a balance between the financial reporting requirements of the donor and not breaching the trust of beneficiaries or putting them at risk. There is no standard practice on how to find the correct balance. The Implementing partner's chosen approach will depend on their mandate, organisational culture (in particular the level of flexibility and the appetite and capacity to manage risk), leadership, etc.

- If this was foreseen in the Description of the Action, implementing partners can apply **a differentiated approach** towards the beneficiaries in terms of required reporting documentation based on the context in which the grantee operates, local accounting requirements, security considerations, capacity of the grantee, its form of organisation and operating modalities, etc.
- Prioritising **security** of the grantee, especially of those working in sensitive contexts. The following measures can be applied to safeguard their safety: anonymising documents, accepting cash payments or alternative payment methods, waiving the requirement to keep the documents after reporting etc.
- **Avoiding double-financing:** In order to ensure complementarity of FSTP schemes and avoid double-financing it is important for implementing partners to keep the Contracting Authority regularly updated on the initiatives supported through FSTP. EU Delegations often facilitate such regular exchanges of information with other implementing partners (and even other donors).



REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Financial Monitoring and Reporting

Centre for the Environment, Bosnia and Herzegovina, developed a cloud application where all information regarding FSTP grants is stored, together with reports on activities, produced materials and all relevant financial documentation. The Centre found this greatly facilitated the audit, as everything was already available in electronic form. The **Belgrade Open School** implemented a similar methodology and digital solution.

Equal Rights & Independent Media (ERIM, formerly known as IREX Europe) tried using output-based contracts, releasing the final instalments to FSTP beneficiaries only when the last deliverables were accepted. ERIM did not ask for detailed list of expenses, trying to move away from financial reporting towards a purely output-based reporting. However, when providing core support, the experience of ERIM shows it can be very difficult to agree on milestones/deliverables with FSTP beneficiaries. Milestones for core support were not included in the EU funding application (only some examples were provided). Milestones were then tailor-made to each specific beneficiary. Surprisingly, beneficiaries themselves found this process quite challenging and insisted on providing invoices instead as they considered it easier to follow and safer as an approach.

Peacebuilding UK has made the experience that financial reports from final beneficiaries tend to include mistakes (i.e., omissions, exchange rate mistakes, etc.) and therefore prefers to collect invoices for incurred expenses in order to be able to provide auditors with the necessary documentation later on.

- When working with **informal groups or individual activists**, some implementing partners found it more feasible both legally and in terms of risk management, to make payments themselves (or through co-applicants). While **this does not constitute FSTP but rather in-kind support**, the case study below presents an alternative approach to managing financial risks (albeit at a high administrative cost for the implementing partner or co-applicant, potentially faced with a high number of small payments to be checked and processed).

**REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE****When FSTP may need to be replaced by in-kind support**

The Belgrade Open School, in partnership with the Young Researchers of Serbia and Environmental Engineering Group, is implementing a project that aims to empower at least 100 civil organisations and informal groups to work on the implementation, advocacy and communication of EU environmental standards and benefits for local communities. In this context, it was necessary to find a solution that would reconcile the audit, financial, and contractual requirements of the EU with the fact that paying cash directly to informal groups is not allowed according to legislation in Serbia. BOS proposed the following model in the Description of the Action:

The co-applicant on the project would support the activities of informal groups directly, by facilitating their expenditure, i.e., directly processing the payments for required services and goods. This method of support, which is not FSTP but rather in-kind support, proved to work well as it was fully in line with local legislation. The simplicity of the process increased the possibility to enable more informal groups to act and supported their activities. The co-applicant is able to monitor the informal groups' activities and intended expenditure before executing the payment.

III. Communication and visibility

Important Reminder on Visibility:

DEVCO(INTPA) Companion, Chapter 19.2.10.3

Article 6 (Visibility) “[...] the beneficiary(ies) shall take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the European Union has financed or co-financed the action. Detailed requirements are explained in the “EU Visibility Manual”

The requirements defined in the “**Communication and Visibility in EU-financed external actions**”²⁶ (2018) are meant to ensure that any communication on EU-funded external actions is consistent with the EU’s values and political priorities and with other EU-related communication activities and events. The requirements are designed to ensure that external actions that are wholly or partially financed by the EU include information and communication measures designed to inform specific or general target audiences about the reasons for the action, the EU’s support for the country or region concerned, and the outcomes and impact of that support²⁷. The requirements apply to EU-financed grants awarded to implementing partners. Partners implementing EU-financed external actions are responsible for publicising those actions and, more generally, the support provided by the EU. In the context of FSTP, implementing partners also bear the responsibility of ensuring their FSTP beneficiaries respect the requirements as well²⁸. When the number of FSTP beneficiaries is high, implementing partners may struggle to ensure that all beneficiaries respect the visibility and communication requirements.

The EU rules and procedures allow for a derogation from the visibility obligations in special circumstances and notably in

situations where a high profile could put the staff employed in the action at risk²⁹. Such derogations must be agreed with the contracting authority in the special conditions and included in the communication plan. Implementing partners should therefore reflect in their application (Description of the Action) whether a derogation from the visibility requirements will be needed.

With the above framework in mind, the following points emerged from discussions during the collaborative process with implementing partners:

- **Training FSTP beneficiaries on communication and visibility** during implementation is likely to improve their adherence to the final donor’s requirements. Implementing partners need to dedicate time and resources to make beneficiaries aware of donor requirements and expectations on communication and visibility. Ideally, any gaps in the capacity of FSTP beneficiaries should be addressed early on, making sure beneficiaries are collecting data (such as feedback surveys, testimonials, community stories, etc.) and producing communication materials which can be further promoted by the implementing partner and potentially the donor. Local consultants or local/interna-

²⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/communication-visibility-requirements-2018_en.pdf

²⁷ Idem.

²⁸ Visibility obligations are defined in Art. 6(1) GC, which is fully applicable to final recipients as well: “6(1) Unless the European Commission agrees or requests otherwise, the beneficiary(ies) shall take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the European Union has financed or co-financed the action.

²⁹ See INTPA Companion 19.2.6. Article 6 - Visibility: “Any request for derogation from the visibility obligations listed in Article 6 must be agreed with the contracting authority in the special conditions and included in the communication plan.”

tional partner organisations can support beneficiaries in their communication and visibility efforts.

- There is a need for implementing partners to have a **structured communication policy** in place, including **communication guidelines for final beneficiaries**, detailing and justifying possible required exceptions to EU standard visibility guidelines.
- While setting up a project webpage and social media pages has become the norm (at least in non-sensitive environments), implementing partners mentioned a number of other tools and practices to improve visibility and communication:
 - Using **storytelling techniques** to communicate results;
 - Creating and promoting **community stories** (focusing on change) and collecting **testimonials** from final beneficiaries;
 - User-centred communication tools, such as e-bulletins, special purpose e-mail address, closed and open social media groups, SMS-news;
- Organising **media visits** to final beneficiaries to witness positive changes;
- Promoting all communication materials through the channels of partner organisations and networks, especially the call announcements.
- In sensitive environments, it is difficult to make success stories public as this may put certain organisations or individuals at risk. **Visibility requirements** should always be **adapted** to the environment (for example by having different levels of visibility requirements already predefined in the EU application of the implementing partner). In some extreme cases, it may be safer for FSTP beneficiaries not to know the name of their counterpart in the FSTP-giving organisation, or even the name of the donor organisation itself. When working in difficult environments, it is important to make **visibility and communication limitations** very clear from the beginning at the EU grant application stage and to request respective derogations from visibility requirements, if necessary.

Visibility requirements should always be adapted to the environment. The EU rules and procedures allow for a derogation from the visibility obligations in special circumstances.

Monitoring, reporting and communicating results: Checklist

When developing their approach for monitoring, reporting and communicating on the results of FSTP, implementing partners should reflect on:

- Monitoring, evaluation and learning approach  Whether the organisation's **monitoring, evaluation and learning** approach can/should be applied/adapted to FSTP, or whether they need to develop a dedicated MEL approach for this purpose.

- Monitoring and reporting mechanisms in FSTP design  How to integrate monitoring and reporting mechanisms already in the **design** of FSTP.

- Information collection  How to **collect information on the impact** of FSTP (both quantitative and qualitative) and how to aggregate and analyse collected data in a way which would be meaningful for the learning process of FSTP beneficiaries, the implementing partner and the donor. Many digital tools are now available both for quantitative and qualitative data and can reduce the workload needed for data gathering and analysis for monitoring and reporting purposes.

- Requirements and templates for reports  The **requirements and templates for narrative and financial reports**, taking into consideration both donor requirements and the capacities of beneficiaries.

- Type of reporting  Whether they will opt for **input-based vs output-based reporting** from their beneficiaries and, if input-based, what type of supporting documents will be required.

- Support to FSTP beneficiaries  If and what kind of **support** should be provided to FSTP beneficiaries on financial issues (guidelines, training, coaching, etc.) in order to mitigate financial risks on both sides.

- Financial risks vs trust  How to **avoid financial risks** while at the same time establishing and maintaining the trust of their FSTP beneficiaries.

- Communication strategy and plan  Their **communication strategy and plan** for any FSTP component (including any derogations needed from the standard EU or other donor requirements, the communication and visibility requirements that will be transferred to their beneficiaries and the type of support beneficiaries may need to be able to fulfill those requirements such as additional guidelines, trainings, coaching).

Appendix I:

Legal Framework and Suggested Sources

I. Financial Regulation, Article 204

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32018R1046&from=EN>

Article 204. Financial support to third parties

Where implementation of an action or a work programme requires the provision of financial support to third parties, the beneficiary may provide such financial support if the conditions for such provision are defined in the grant agreement between the beneficiary and the Commission, with no margin for discretion by the beneficiary.

No margin for discretion shall be considered to exist if the grant agreement specifies the following:

- a. the maximum amount of financial support that can be paid to a third party which shall not exceed EUR 60 000 and the criteria for determining the exact amount;
- b. the different types of activities that may receive such financial support, on the basis of a fixed list;
- c. the definition of the persons or categories of persons which may receive such financial support and the criteria for providing it.

The threshold referred to in point (a) of the second paragraph may be exceeded where achieving the objectives of the actions would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult.

II. PRAG, Chapter 6.9.2

<https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/document.do?nodeNumber=6.9.2>

6.9.2. Financial support to third parties by grant beneficiaries

If the action requires financial support to be given to third parties⁴⁰, it may be given on condition that:

- Before awarding the grant, the contracting authority has verified that the grant beneficiary offers appropriate guarantees as regards the recovery of amounts due to the European Commission. This is due to the fact that the grant beneficiaries remain financially responsible vis-à-vis the contracting authority for the correct use of the financial support.
- The following conditions for giving such support are strictly defined in the grant contract to avoid the exercise of discretion by the grant beneficiary. By default, the applicants will include this information in their applications:
 - a. The objectives and results to be obtained with the financial support
 - b. The different types of activities eligible for financial support, on the basis of a fixed list

Where no specific activities are supported (e.g., unconditional cash transfers to refugees to support their living or to human right defenders to support their work in general) this must also be specified. In this case, the grant beneficiary does not have to demonstrate that the financial support has been used by the recipients of financial support for a specific purpose.

- c. The types of persons or categories of persons that may receive financial support

As basic acts usually do not foresee restrictions on nationality and origin regarding the recipients of financial support the contracting authority has to include any such restrictions in the guidelines for applicants.

- d. The criteria for selecting these entities and giving the financial support

Where the contracting authority wants to ensure that the beneficiary complies with certain principles and/or procedures justified by the specifics of a call (e.g., where large amounts will be redistributed through calls for proposals), this should be set forth in the guidelines for applicants. For example, the guidelines could foresee that, when launching calls for proposals for the award of financial support, beneficiaries may use their own procedures provided these procedures comply with the principles of proportionality, sound financial management, equal treatment and non-discrimination, ensure transparency with adequate publication of calls for proposals and prevent conflict of interests throughout the entire award procedure.

- e. The criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support for each third entity

Where the contracting authority wants to ensure that the financial support should be based e.g., on costs actually incurred or comply with the no-profit-principle this needs to be specified in the guidelines for applicants.

- f. The maximum amount that may be given

The maximum amount of financial support that can be paid must not exceed EUR 60 000 per third party, except where achieving the objectives of the actions would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult. In that case, no limits apply⁴¹.

Where the contracting authority wants to apply a total ceiling for the giving of financial support (i.e., the available envelope for the applicants in this regard), this needs to be specified in the guidelines for applicants.

Applicants may also be invited in the guidelines for applicants to propose the necessary documents to be kept by third parties to demonstrate that the financial support has been used in accordance with the grant contract.

In the current context where grants of a large amount are encouraged to avoid the multiplication of small contracts, financial support to third parties can be an effective way to fund grass-roots organisations or local authorities, within the above-described limits.

For the avoidance of doubt, rules on financial support apply only where a beneficiary provides this support to a third party. The criteria above do not need to be complied with when funds are provided to co-beneficiaries or affiliated entities.

III. INTPA Companion, Chapter 19.2.10.3 Financial Support to Third Parties

Text of the article

10(5) In order to support the achievement of the objectives of the action, and in particular where the implementation of the action requires financial support to be given to third parties, the beneficiary(ies) may award financial support if so, provided by the special conditions.

Guidelines

It may happen that the implementation of the action involves the award by beneficiaries of financial support to third parties (FSTP).

FSTP may be a 'grant in cascade' not necessarily following a call for proposals, or a financial contribution of a different nature (see further details below). The persons/entities receiving FSTP are the final recipients of the EU funds.

This is allowed provided that the objectives or results to be obtained are clearly detailed in the description of the action and that all the following conditions are fulfilled:

1. The contracting authority has verified that the coordinator offers adequate guarantees as regards the recovery of amounts due. Indeed, in the event of a recovery order at the end of the action, the contracting authority exclusively turns to the coordinator, who then may be asked to reimburse amounts that beneficiaries or affiliated entities have unduly transferred as FSTP. A thorough assessment of the coordinator's financial capacity is therefore recommended prior to awarding a contract involving FSTP.
2. Beneficiaries may not exercise any discretionary power in granting FS to third parties. In order to ensure this, the guidelines for applicants require that the proposals include:
 - a fixed and exhaustive list of the different types of activities for which a third party may receive FS,

- the definition of the persons or categories of persons that may receive FS,
- the criteria for awarding FS,
- the maximum amount to be granted to each third party and the criteria for determining it.

In all events, these elements have to be specified in the contract (notably in the description of the action).

For further information on FS to third parties see section 6.9.2 of the Practical Guide.

3. Beneficiaries must ensure that recipients of FS allow the contracting authority, the Commission, OLAF, and the Court of Auditors to exercise their powers of control on documents, information, even stored on electronic media, or in the recipient's premises (see Article 10(9)).

For FSTP, the beneficiaries are fully responsible for the implementation of the action in compliance with the contract. This does not mean however that the beneficiaries must recover funds unduly paid to a third-party recipient. Nor does it mean that the FS to third parties must take the form of reimbursement of certain costs (with associated eligibility conditions). It is possible, but not compulsory.

Text of the article

Guidelines

It only means that if the conditions set out in the contract for FSTP are not fulfilled, the corresponding costs incurred by the beneficiaries will not be eligible.

Example: FS is, in accordance with the contract, to be given to local NGOs for teaching activities. The funds received as FS are used by local NGOs for their own promotion. The FS given by the beneficiary is ineligible, the funds incorrectly used will be recovered by the con-

tracting authority from the coordinator (regardless of who is at fault and of whether the coordinator decides to recover that money from the local NGOs or not).

Finally, beneficiaries cannot be exempted from their responsibility on the basis of the argument that the action was not properly implemented due to a failure by the recipients of FS.

10(6) The maximum amount of financial support shall be limited to EUR 60 000 per each third party, except where achieving the objectives of the actions would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult.

In former Financial Regulation⁴, the maximum amount of financial support must be limited to EUR 60 000 per each third party, except where the main purpose of the action is to redistribute the grant.

With the new 2018 FR, this threshold may be exceeded where achieving the objectives of the actions would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult.

FSTP is an activity carried out within the contract, and may be implemented by all beneficiaries, as well as affiliated entities, provided that the mandatory conditions stated in the contract are fulfilled. Indeed, the cost eligibility conditions applicable to affiliated entities are the same as those applicable to the beneficiaries. So, they may award FS to third parties under the same conditions as beneficiaries (i.e., on the condition that all the minimum elements required in the Description

of the Action are respected).

When a beneficiary pays FS on the basis of a 'global amount' this amount is not to be considered as simplified cost options in the contract (for the beneficiaries vis-à-vis the contracting authority it is just like any other actual cost incurred - see Article 10(6)).

The guidelines for applicants of the call for proposals may further restrict the conditions for providing FSTP, for instance setting a lower maximum amount.

The guidelines may also foresee limitations or requirements (such as principles for the award procedures for FSTP) that will apply to FSTP under the specific call. For further information, see Section 6.9.2 of the PRAG.

⁴ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 (OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1).

Text of the article

10(7) The description of the action, in conformity with the relevant instructions given in this regard by the contracting authority, shall define the types of entities eligible for financial support and include a fixed list with the types of activity which may be eligible for financial support. The criteria for the selection of the third parties recipient of this financial support, including the criteria for determining its exact amount, shall also be specified.

Guidelines

It is essential for the eligibility of FS, that all these mandatory conditions are strictly defined in the contract (notably in Annex I), in compliance with the guidelines for applicants and with any conditions or restrictions set out regarding:

- i. the objectives and results to be obtained with the financial support
- ii. the different types of activities eligible for financial support, on the basis of a fixed list
- iii. the types of persons/entities or categories of persons/entities that may receive financial support
- iv. the criteria for selecting these persons/entities and giving the financial support
- v. the criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support for each third party, and
- vi. the maximum amount that may be given.

The eligible categories of persons/entities are not necessarily those eligible under the call for proposals with regard to beneficiaries and affiliated entities: usually the basic acts do not impose any specific nationality rule on recipients of FS. In fact, it is the guidelines for a specific call for proposals and/or the contract that will set the relevant criteria, if needed. It may be the case where a nationality restriction is desirable/appropriate to achieve the results, or it may be not.

The modalities through which the FSTP is granted (e.g., following a call for proposals, direct award, etc.) must also be specified.

It is advised to agree with the beneficiaries in the description of the action on unit or lump sum amounts, together with the criteria for

payment of those amounts, rather than on reimbursement of costs, unless justified by the nature of the FSTP (e.g., where the financial support targets a specific activity to be implemented by the third party).

The FSTP may take the form of ‘unconditional cash transfer’ where no specific activities are supported: this should be set forth in the guidelines for applicants.

‘Unconditional’, means that FSTP is given without anything in return, i.e., without any specific result other than helping the final recipients, e.g., support to human right defenders, scholarships to facilitate mobility, allowances to refugees, unemployed, etc. FSTP may even be the primary aim of the action and represent the core activity per se. It is not an issue provided the objective of the action clearly requires this type of financial support to third parties. Cash transfers are allowed provided the beneficiaries can prove payment (for example a paper from the recipient acknowledging receipt of the cash amount), since the costs must be verifiable to be eligible.

NB. ‘Unconditional’ does not mean that the conditions for giving financial support are not established in the contract. This would not be acceptable.

‘Conditional’ transfers are also possible (e.g., seed money to a micro-enterprise subject to establishment of favourable working conditions or recruitment of women).

Text of the article

Guidelines

10(8) The coordinator shall provide in its report to the contracting authority a comprehensive and detailed report on the award and implementation of any financial support given. These reports should provide, amongst other, information on the award procedures, on the identities of the recipient of financial support, the amount granted, the results achieved, the problems encountered, and solutions found, the activities carried out as well as a timetable of the activities which still need to be carried out.

Keep in mind that the FSTP is justified if given to support the achievement of the objectives of the action.

The FSTP has to be necessary for the implementation of the action, and embedded in its design.

Refer to Article 16(9) on supporting documents.

The FSTP must be clearly identifiable in the budget under Heading 6 'Other'.

10(9) To the extent relevant, the beneficiary(ies) shall ensure that the conditions applicable to them under Articles 3, 4(1)-4(4), 6 and 16 of these general conditions are also applicable to third parties awarded financial support.

The third parties receiving financial support from the beneficiaries are not subject to the same eligibility criteria as those applicable to beneficiaries and affiliated entities under the call for proposals.

Likewise, the FS granted to those third parties is not subject to the general principles applicable to grants, and the conditions for calculating the exact amount do not necessarily encompass the no-profit principle (i.e., there may be a case where the no-profit check is appropriate, or it may be not: this has to be specified in the call for proposals and/or the contract).

FSTP should be conceived in such a way as to be an efficient and easy tool for the achievement of the purpose of the action.

This does not exempt the need to define in the contract the categories of persons or entities who may receive FS from the beneficiaries and the maximum amount of FS together with the way the exact amount is calculated (see above Article 10(5)).

'To the extent relevant' in Article 10(9) means that not all of the listed Articles of the general conditions will be transferred exactly to the contracts with all recipients. As a general rule, recipients of FS that implement part of the project and manage the funds in a similar way as the beneficiaries will have to comply with all provisions that have to be 'forwarded' by the beneficiaries:

Article 3 applies in full, which means that the recipients must indemnify and hold harmless the contracting authority against claims, damages, losses and expenses arising out of or resulting from the recipient's involvement in the action.

Articles 4(1) to 4(4) apply in full. Where the recipient has to provide information, it will provide this information to the beneficiaries who must then forward it to the contracting authority. However, Article 4(5) does not apply to recipients of FS.

Article 6(1) applies in full.

Text of the article

Guidelines

Article 6(2): The recipients do not have to provide a communication plan, but they have to assist - where necessary - the beneficiary to produce its communication plan.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) apply in full.

Article 6(5) applies except for the reference to Article 3.

Articles 16(1) to 16(2) must not apply to recipients unless expressly required in the relevant guidelines for applicants and/or the contract.

Articles 16(3) to 16(6) apply in full.

Articles 16(7) to 16(9) apply to the extent that the relevant documents need to be kept for the period stipulated in Article 16(7). However, only those documents need to be kept that are necessary to verify that the funds have been used for the purpose and in line with the contract. For further information on the documents to be kept see Article 16(9).

On the other hand, for example refugees who receive a general support to their living do not have to comply with the aforementioned provisions.

IV. General Conditions Applicable to European Union-financed Grant Contracts for External Actions

Art. 10.5 - Art. 10.9, Financial support to third parties 10.5.

In order to support the achievement of the objectives of the action, and in particular where the implementation of the action requires financial support to be given to third parties, the beneficiary(ies) may award financial support if so, provided by the special conditions.

10.6.

The maximum amount of financial support shall be limited to EUR 60 000 per each third party, except where achieving the objectives of the actions would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult.

10.7.

The description of the action, in conformity with the relevant instructions given in this regard by the contracting authority, shall define the types of entities eligible for financial support and include a fixed list with the types of activity which may be eligible for financial support. The criteria for the selection of the third party's recipient of this financial support, including the criteria for determining its exact amount, shall also be specified.

10.8.

The coordinator shall provide in its report to the contracting authority a comprehensive and detailed report on the award and implementation of any financial support given. These reports should provide, amongst other, information on

the award procedures, on the identities of the recipient of financial support, the amount granted, the results achieved, the problems encountered, and solutions found, the activities carried out as well as a timetable of the activities which still need to be carried out.

10.9.

To the extent relevant, the beneficiary(ies) shall ensure that the conditions applicable to them under Articles 3, 4.1-4.4, 6 and 16 of these general conditions are also applicable to third parties awarded financial support

ARTICLE 3 - LIABILITY

3.1.

The contracting authority cannot under any circumstances or for any reason whatsoever be held liable for damage or injury sustained by the staff or property of the beneficiary(ies) while the action is being carried out or as a consequence of the action. The contracting authority cannot, therefore, accept any claim for compensation or increases in payment in connection with such damage or injury.

3.2.

The beneficiary(ies) shall assume sole liability towards third parties, including liability for damage or injury of any kind sustained by them while the action is being carried out or as a consequence of the action. The beneficiary(ies) shall discharge the contracting authority of all liability arising from any claim or action brought as a result of an infringement of

rules or regulations by the beneficiary(ies) or the beneficiary(ies)'s employees or individuals for whom those employees are responsible, or as a result of violation of a third party's rights. For the purpose of this Article 3 employees of the beneficiary(ies) shall be considered third parties.

ARTICLE 4 - CONFLICT OF INTERESTS AND CODE OF CONDUCT

4.1.

The beneficiary(ies) shall take all necessary measures to prevent or end any situation that could compromise the impartial and objective performance of this contract. Such conflict of interests may arise in particular as a result of economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties, or any other relevant connection or shared interest.

4.2.

Any conflict of interests which may arise during performance of this contract must be notified in writing to the contracting authority without delay. In the event of such conflict, the coordinator shall immediately take all necessary steps to resolve it.

4.3.

The contracting authority reserves the right to verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken if necessary.

4.4.

The beneficiary(ies) shall ensure that its staff, including its management, is not placed in a situation which could give rise to conflict of interests. Without prejudice to its obligation under this contract, the beneficiary(ies) shall replace, immediately and without compensation from the contracting authority, any member of its staff in such a situation.

ARTICLE 6 - VISIBILITY**6.1.**

Unless the European Commission agrees or requests otherwise, the beneficiary(ies) shall take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the European Union has financed or co-financed the action. Such measures shall comply with the Communication and Visibility Requirements for European Union External Actions laid down and published by the European Commission, that can be found at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-visibility-requirements-2018_en.pdf (for actions within DG DEVCO's remit) and at https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/visibility_requirements-near_english.pdf (for actions within DG NEAR's remit) or with any other guidelines agreed between the European Commission and the beneficiary(ies).

6.2.

The coordinator shall submit a communication plan for the approval of the European Commission and report on its implementation in accordance with Article 2.

6.3.

In particular, the beneficiary(ies) shall mention the action and the European Union's financial contribution in information given to the final recipients of the action, in its internal and annual reports, and in any dealings with the media. It shall display the European Union logo wherever appropriate.

6.4.

Any notice or publication by the beneficiary(ies) concerning the action, including those given at conferences or seminars, shall specify that the action has received European Union funding. Any publication by the beneficiary(ies), in whatever form and by whatever medium, including the internet, shall include the following statement: 'This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of < beneficiary(ies)'s name > and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.'

6.5.

The beneficiary(ies) authorises the contracting authority and the European Commission (where it is not the contracting authority) to publish its name and address, nationality, the purpose of the grant, duration and location as well as the maximum amount of the grant and the rate of funding of the action's costs, as laid down in Article 3 of the special conditions. Derogation from publication of this information

may be granted if it could endanger the beneficiary(ies) or harm their interests.

ARTICLE 16 — ACCOUNTS AND TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL CHECKS

Accounts

16.1.

The beneficiary(ies) shall keep accurate and regular accounts of the implementation of the action using an appropriate accounting and double-entry book-keeping system.

The accounts:

- a. may be an integrated part of or an adjunct to the beneficiary(ies)'s regular system;
- b. shall comply with the accounting and bookkeeping policies and rules that apply in the country concerned;
- c. shall enable income and expenditure relating to the action to be easily traced, identified and verified.

16.2.

The coordinator shall ensure that any financial report as required under Article 2 can be properly and easily reconciled to the accounting and bookkeeping system and to the underlying accounting and other relevant records. For this purpose, the beneficiary(ies) shall prepare and keep appropriate reconciliations, supporting schedules, analyses and breakdowns for inspection and verification.

Appendix II:

Organisational Development Assessment Methodology for Civil Society Organisations in Montenegro

Developed by Fund for Active Citizenship

CSO Development Index

Authorship: the basic methodology was developed through the joint efforts of the Fund for Active Citizenship - fAKT staff and their consultant, Mladen Jovanović (ENPS). The indicators were developed by the consultant, and the final version of the methodology was created again in cooperation between fAKT staff and the consultant.

Methodology overview

Purpose: To support CSOs in identifying their development priorities, and to allow measurable monitoring by fAKT of its contribution to the development of CSOs supported through its grant programs and trainings. Assessments obtained using this methodology are not used when assessing the quality of projects of CSOs that go through the Index, but are exclusively used as a guideline in the development of CSOs.

Description of scores:

Average score	Description of score (development index)
6.0 – 7.0	Dimension advanced
3.0 – 5.9	Dimension evolving
1.0 – 2.9	Dimension in early development

Index dimensions:

- Organisational structure and legal framework
- Organisational capacity and infrastructure
- Financial stability
- Service delivery
- Public image

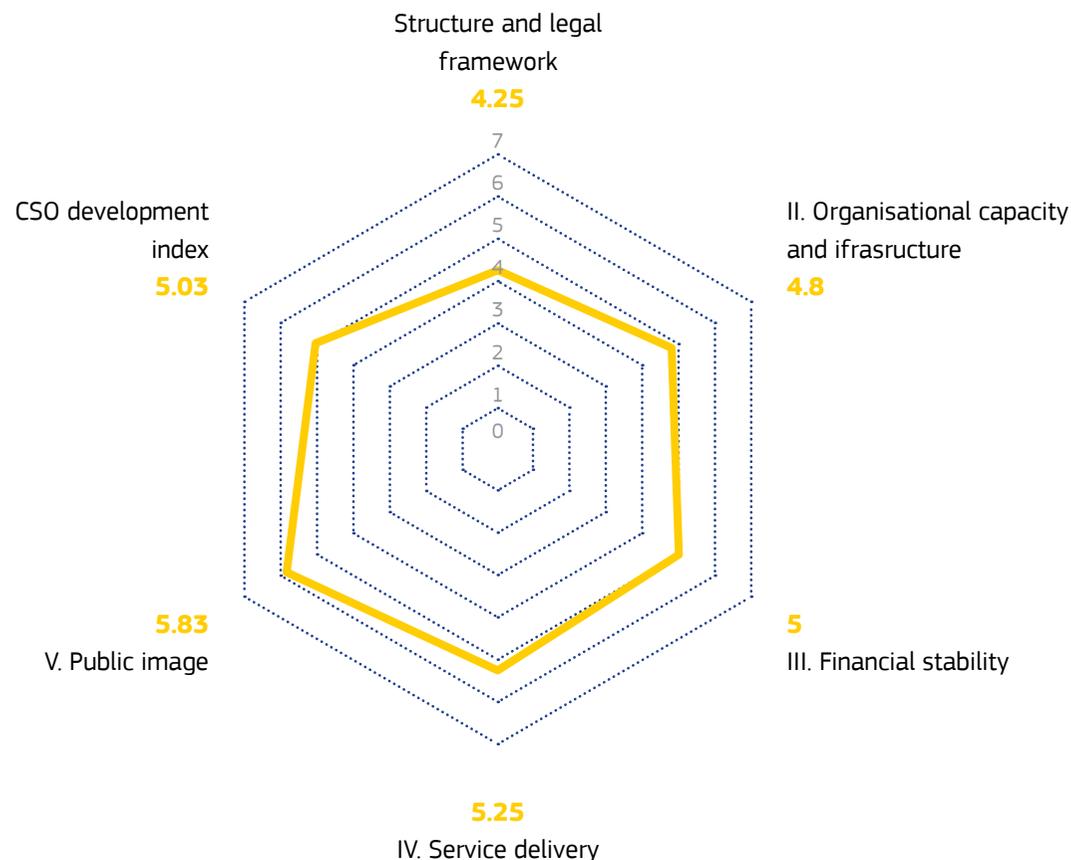
Rating:

- Organisations rate all dimensions on a scale of 1-7, with 1 being the lowest, and 7 the highest score
- Each dimension includes 4-6 questions/indicators that are rated separately
- The average score of all questions/indicators is the average score for the dimension concerned
- The overall organisation development index is obtained as the average score of all dimensions (Appendix A: graphical presentation of a rating example)
- The narrative description of scores is given for scores 1, 3, 5 and 7
- If the organisation believes that its reality does not correspond to any of the descriptions, it can use scores 2, 4 and 6 to show that it is in between two scores (two descriptions)

For each of the questions, there is a list of items to be provided to verify the score.

Verification is done using documents or material confirming accuracy of the statement.

**Graphical presentation of Index on a fictitious example of an organisation
Organisational development index**



Appendix III:

Birlikte Self-Assessment Tool: Example

Developed by Civil Society Development Centre

Grades used: **1:** No implementation, **2:** Ad hoc implementation, **3:** System defined, **4:** System widely established and implemented, **5:** System is being reviewed and improved

Planning and Implementation	S: (S)trength I: What to (I)mprove	Grade
1. Governance and Decision Making		
1.1. How is the composition of the management/executive team? Are the teams/units defined?	S: I:	3.0
1.2. Does the management / executive team take decisions in a participatory way and with common sense?		
1.3. Does the management / executive team actively participate in developing/revisiting the mission and vision statements?	S: I:	3.0
1.4. Does the management /executive team actively participates in the process of identification of strategies and objectives?	S: I:	3.0
1.5. Does the management /executive team use a common language and common messages in their communication with stakeholders in line with the organisation's mission ?	S: I:	3.0
1.6. Does the management / executive team design and coordinate the organisational structure, processes, projects and systems in line with the organisation's strategies?	S: I:	3.0
Unit Score		3.0
2. Strategic Planning		
2.1. Do you analyse the organisation's stakeholders and their expectations?	S: I:	2.0
2.2. Do you conduct internal or external analyses? Do you conduct benchmarking for national and international organisations?	S: I:	2.0
2.3. Do you identify your long-term goals and strategies on the basis of your analyses? Are the goals/targets measurable and timely?	S: I:	2.0

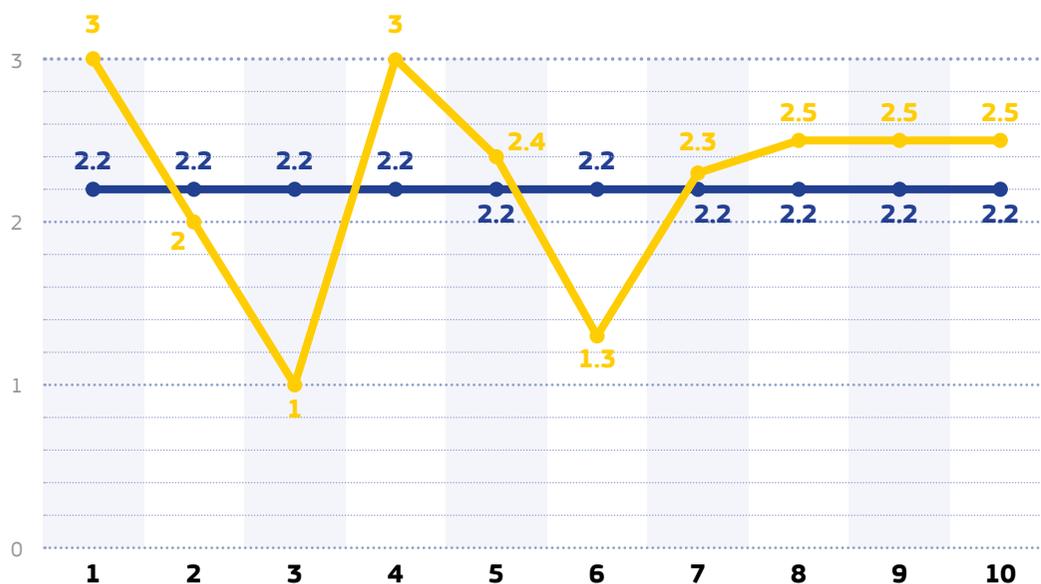
Planning and Implementation	S: (S)trength I: What to (I)mprove	Grade
2.4. Do you monitor the organisation's progress with reference to the strategic plan at the specified intervals? Do you have measures for deviations from goals?	S: I:	2.0
2.5. Do you define organisational processes, projects, annual plans and budget on the basis of your Strategic Plan?	S: I:	2.0
Unit Score		2.0
3. Employees and Volunteers		
3.1. Have you defined criteria and methods for the recruitment of management / executive team, employees and volunteers in line with strategies and needs?*	S: I:	1.0
3.2. Do you have and implement development plans for managers, employees and volunteers such as orientation and trainings?	S: I:	1.0
3.3. Do you monitor the effectiveness of the executive team in activities such as fund raising and representation? Do you monitor the effectiveness of your employees and volunteers in their areas of activity? Do you provide feedback with appropriate methods?	S: I:	1.0
3.4. Do you have mediums/sites for sharing information?	S: I:	1.0
3.5. Do you recognise and appreciate employees and volunteers at specified times and with specified methods?	S: I:	1.0
*Period of change for members of Board of Directors and Board of Supervisors, criterias of equal opportunity for managers, employees and volunteers		
Unit Score		1.0
4. Cooperations, Partnerships and Networks		
4.1. Do you analyse organisations and networks/platforms for partnership and cooperation at international, national, regional and local levels?	S: I:	3.0
4.2. Do you analyse capabilities of partners and cooperations? Do you analyse the impact of the networks/platforms in your area of work in the direction of your strategies?	S: I:	3.0
4.3. Do you formulate and implement policies and methods to work effectively and harmoniously with your partners and cooperating institutions?	S: I:	3.0
4.4. Do you monitor and analyse the impact of networks and the performance of mutual the work with your partners and the cooperations/collaborations?	S: I:	3.0
Unit Score		3.0

Planning and Implementation	S: (S)trength I: What to (I)mprove	Grade
5. Resource Management		
5.1. How do you plan your budget?	S: I:	1.0
5.2. How do you track your flow of cash (including debit and credit)?	S: I:	1.0
5.3. How do you conduct your fund-raising activities? (such as grants, project support, donations, membership fees, sponsorship)	S: I:	1.0
5.4. What mechanisms do you have to ensure the organisation's transparency and accountability?	S: I:	1.0
5.6. Do you acquire and use technology in line with your strategies?	S: I:	3.0
5.7. Do you have methods or sites to store CSO related information? Do you have methods and procedures to ensure the access of relevant people within the organisation?	S: I:	4.0
5.8. Do you have methods/applications to ensure the security of information?	S: I:	4.0
5.9. Do you have methods or policies for resource (including the resources such as electricity, use of paper or natural resources like water) management to ensure sustainability?	S: I:	4.0
Unit Score		2.4
6. Field of Action/Intervention		
6.1. Do you collect beneficiary and target group expectations and needs in your field of work? Do you develop processes, projects and activities on the basis of these needs and expectations?	S: I:	2.0
6.2. How do you keep track of the field of action to improve/update your activities (processes, projects)? Do you learn from other organisations?	S: I:	1.0
6.3. Does your target group participate in your activities?	S: I:	1.0
6.4. Do you collect and use/analyse target group/beneficiary feedback (including appreciations and complaints) to improve your activities? Which methods do you use?	S: I:	1.0
Unit Score		1.3

Planning and Implementation	S: (S)trength I: What to (I)mprove	Grade
7. Communication		
7.1. Do you analyse your stakeholders and target group for your communication plan?	S: I:	1.0
"7.2. Do you have a communication plan for the use of channels* and messages in communicating with your stakeholders? * digital channels; web, social media, software"	S: I:	4.0
7.3. How do you negotiate with key decision makers and bodies/agents of influence?	S: I:	2.0
Unit Score		2.3
Monitoring&Evaluation	S: (S)trength I: What to (I)mprove	Grade
8. Beneficiary and Target Group Satisfaction		
8.1. Did you define what to measure (in assessing/evaluating beneficiary and target group satisfaction)? If yes, what are these?	S: I:	1.0
8.2. Did you define specific targets? Are they SMART?	S: I:	3.0
8.3. Does the actual performance meet the target?	S: I:	2.0
8.4. Do you analyse the results?	S: I:	4.0
Unit Score		2.5
9. Employee and Volunteer Satisfaction		
8.1. Did you define what to measure (in assessing/evaluating employee and Volunteer Satisfaction)? If yes, what are these?	S: I:	1.0
8.2. Did you define specific targets? Are they SMART?	S: I:	3.0
8.3. Does the actual performance meet the target?	S: I:	2.0
8.4. Do you analyse the results?	S: I:	4.0
Unit Score		2.5

Monitoring&Evaluation	S: (S)trength I: What to (I)mprove	Grade
Activity / Process / Project Results		
8.1. Did you define what to measure (in evaluating the activities/processes/project results)? If yes, what are these?	S: I:	1.0
8.2. Did you define specific targets? Are they SMART?	S: I:	2.0
8.3. Does the actual performance meet the target?	S: I:	3.0
8.4. Do you analyse the results?	S: I:	4.0
Unit Score		2.5

Intermediate Self-Assessment Table and Graph



- 1. Governance and Decision Making
- 2. Strategic Planning
- 3. Employees and Volunteers
- 4. Cooperations, Partnerships and Networks
- 5. Resource Management
- 6. Field of Action/Intervention
- 7. Communication
- 8. Beneficiary and Target Group Satisfaction
- 9. Employee and Volunteer Satisfaction
- 10. Activity / Process / Project Results

- Organisation Name or Abbreviationscores
- Organisation Name or Abbreviation average

Prioritization Matrix

What to Improve	Solution Alternatives	Impact of improvement on CSO's strategies and objectives	Time to be used for improvement	Prioritized Improvement
1. Governance and Decision Making		4	4	16.0
		1	2	2.0
2. Strategic Planning		3	3	9.0
		2	2	4.0
3. Employees and Volunteers				0.0
		2	3	6.0
4. Cooperations, Partnerships and Networks				0.0
				0.0
5. Resource Management				0.0
				0.0
6. Field of Action/Intervention				0.0
				0.0
7. Communication				0.0
				0.0
8. Beneficiary and Target Group Satisfaction				0.0
				0.0
9. Employee and Volunteer Satisfaction		3	1	3.0
				0.0
Activity / Process / Project Results				0.0
				0.0

Impact of improvement on CSO's strategies and objectives

- 1) Not effective
- 2) Partially effective
- 3) Effective
- 4) Very effective

Time to be used for improvement

- 1) Long
- 2) Medium
- 3) Short
- 4) Very short

Prioritized Improvement

(ImpactxResource) The highest score is 16, themes with the highest score have the highest priority.



Appendix IV:

Organisational Capacity Assessment and Development

Developed by People in Need (PIN)

Capacity area	Possible development directions	Questions to ask ourselves	What are we doing well, like, are proud of	What would we like to work on	Self-score
I. Origin story and strategy					
1.1. Organisation's identity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas Values People Work we want to do 	<p>People within the organisation understand the ideas on which it is founded and relate to the organisation's values.</p> <p>There is a high degree of consensus between different members about the organisation's reason for existing and the work it proposes to do.</p>	<p>Who are we? Who are all the people that make up our organisation (including leaders, members, staff, volunteers, board, etc.)?</p> <p>Are we able to name the main ideas (thoughts, theories, principles) behind our organisation's work?</p> <p>Do we discuss the values the organisation was founded on, and how our values relate to the work we do?</p> <p>Can we formulate our organisation's history and purpose for existing (i.e. as origin story, vision of change, or in another form)?</p> <p>Do we relate to / feel motivated by this purpose?</p>			
1.2. Context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What's around us? Where does our work fit? 	<p>People in the organisation work to understand the social, civil, economic, political and environmental conditions and relationships at the local, national and global levels as they relate to its work.</p> <p>Organisation's work is relevant to its context, both in terms of identified problems and opportunities for change.</p>	<p>How do we develop our understanding of the environment as it relates to our work? Is it based on theories, data, review of policies/legislation, lived experience or a mix of the above?</p> <p>Do we have a complex understanding the nature of the problem we are trying to solve, its root causes and ways it affects people? Are we aware of power dynamics, relationships, cultural factors and local specifics involved?</p> <p>Is our approach adapted to our context so that it has a chance to succeed?</p>			

Capacity area	Possible development directions	Questions to ask ourselves	What are we doing well, like, are proud of	What would we like to work on	Self-score
		<p>Are we trying to influence / change the conditions that affect the problem?</p> <p>Are we working to update our understanding and approach as context changes?</p>			
<p>1.3. Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities • Planning • Choices • Benchmarks 	<p>The organisation has a written strategic plan that outlines priorities, timeline, costs and responsibilities.</p> <p>People in the organisation and active community members have a chance to contribute to the strategy and identify with it.</p> <p>Strategy helps the organisation with making difficult choices.</p>	<p>Do we have a bold and realistic picture of where we want to be and of change we want to influence in 1 to 2 years?</p> <p>Do we have a written strategic plan and is it up to date? Are our priorities clear and in line with our identity and context?</p> <p>Who is involved in strategic planning?</p> <p>Does the strategic plan include some benchmarks that we can monitor to see if we are moving in the right direction?</p> <p>Do we consider our strategy (or mission, vision) when evaluating new project, partnership or funding opportunities?</p>			
II. Relationships					
<p>2.1. Being part of the organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support • Autonomy • Conflict management 	<p>Leaders and people in the organisation create an environment in which everyone can contribute, express themselves, learn and grow.</p>	<p>Do the people in our organisation know and value each other and appreciate working together? Do we help each other feel supported, learn and grow?</p> <p>Is there space for people to share critical opinions? To take part in decision-making? To autonomously shape parts of the work they do?</p> <p>Is conflict handled and resolved with respect? Do we treat each other with respect, especially when we disagree?</p>			
<p>2.2. Constituency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our community • People we are serving • People who support us (with their time, money or ideas) • Engagement • Accountability 	<p>The organisation is known in and considered part of the community that it serves (it can be built around a place, idea, problem or identity; can be several communities at once).</p> <p>The organisation has personal knowledge of people in this community, their complex lives and needs.</p>	<p>Who are our constituents (both people who support us, and people we serve)? Can we estimate approximate numbers, gender, age, socio-economic info? Is our constituency growing or stable?</p> <p>Do we offer opportunities for people in our community to get to know us?</p> <p>Do we offer opportunities to take part in and support our work, i.e. volunteer drives, fundraising campaigns, petitions, public events? Are we happy with the level of participation?</p> <p>Does feedback from people in our community have a place in shaping of our strategy and day-to-day work? Do we actively seek it out? In which ways? How do we incorporate it in our work?</p>			

Capacity area	Possible development directions	Questions to ask ourselves	What are we doing well, like, are proud of	What would we like to work on	Self-score
	<p>People in the community have information they need about the organisation and how it operates, have a voice in the organisation, trust its decision-making and offer their support (as time, money or other participation).</p> <p>Organisation is accountable to the people it serves and to the people who support it on its results and use of resources.</p>	<p>Do we share information about our finances and the results of our work with our constituents? Do we receive any questions? How do we respond?</p> <p>If we work in an environment where full transparency would be dangerous, do we think about people who could be interested, benefit from and support our work, and how to engage them?</p>			
<p>2.3. Community empowerment and development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in the public sphere • Confidence, interest, knowledge, engagement • Making space for marginalised voices 	<p>The organisation effectively works with and builds the capacity of the community to engage in the public sphere and hold the decision-makers accountable.</p>	<p>Do we encourage members or the public to become engaged in the public sphere and take influencing actions?</p> <p>How do we build the confidence of our community to engage in campaigns, public discussion and policy processes?</p> <p>Is our community becoming more knowledgeable and active on issues that we care about?</p> <p>Is inclusion one of our values? Do we ensure that the voices of women, young people, vulnerable or marginalised people in the community are heard in decision- and policy-making processes?</p> <p>Is environmental sustainability one of our values? Are we aware of our organisation's environmental impact? Do we motivate people in our community to be aware of the issues and get involved?</p> <p>If the authorities in the country or region where we work do not encourage public participation, do we look for influence paths that could be possible in our community and legal framework?</p>			
<p>2.4. Stakeholder engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allies, networks • Donors • Public sector • Private sector 	<p>The organisation is aware of the other actors who (can) influence their area of work, and knows how to decide if and how it will engage with them.</p>	<p>Are we aware of other institutions and organisations that could help or hinder our efforts due to their position, power, resources, thematic or geographic focus? Does our awareness extend to local, regional, national or international level?</p> <p>Do we have good relationships with our “natural allies”? If not, who is missing? Does our organisation belong to formal or informal collaborations, networks?</p>			

Capacity area	Possible development directions	Questions to ask ourselves	What are we doing well, like, are proud of	What would we like to work on	Self-score
		<p>How do we decide whether to engage with an influential actor (i.e. government agencies, local authorities, businesses) in a collaborative or critical manner, or not at all?</p> <p>How do we decide whether to seek or accept funding from a particular donor or source? Do we keep focus on our own priorities when engaging with donors, calls for proposals or public tenders?</p>			
<p>2.5. Communication strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful message • Social and traditional media • Symbols and creative expression 	<p>There is a communication plan reflecting these relationships and the influence the organisation wishes to have in its community and society.</p> <p>The organisation's public communication and media presence is an integral part of its work for change.</p>	<p>Do we have an up-to-date website, active social media accounts? Do we follow the number of visitors/followers and try to increase engagement?</p> <p>Do we have relationships with media institutions that could help us achieve our goals?</p> <p>Do our materials / materials published about us reflect our main ideas, values and purpose?</p> <p>Do we adapt our communication style / language to our audiences?</p> <p>Do we have a logo or other identifying symbols, and do we know how and when to use them?</p> <p>Do we work with visual, storytelling, creative methods to help many different people connect with our message?</p> <p>What do we do if people don't believe us, actively disagree or oppose our work?</p>			
<p>III. Programs, capacities and resources</p>					
<p>3.1. Programs, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research, • Services to community, • Campaigns for change, • Policy initiatives 	<p>All organisation's programs are meaningful, reflect its identity, match the context and real needs.</p> <p>The organisation is aware of project cycle management (or another style of planning steps, time and resources to achieve a goal) and using it in a way that makes sense in their work.</p>	<p>List the organisation's main programs (areas of work) and ask the following questions about each of them:</p> <p>Does it fit our identity and strategy?</p> <p>Is it based on evidence and real needs? How do we know?</p> <p>Do we know what is needed to make change happen? Are we engaging all actors, resources, media and policy channels?</p> <p>Is our community involved in the design and realisation?</p> <p>Is it well-planned and budgeted?</p> <p>Do we monitor, collect feedback and adjust it as we go?</p> <p>How do we know if our approach works? If we don't really know, how can we find out?</p>			

Capacity area	Possible development directions	Questions to ask ourselves	What are we doing well, like, are proud of	What would we like to work on	Self-score
	The organisation has at least the minimum knowledge, capacities and resources needed to run the program well, and is continuously seeking means to do it better.	<p>Are there people (members, staff, volunteers, consultants) in place with the necessary knowledge and skills?</p> <p>Do we have enough resources to do at least the necessary minimum for the program to make sense? Are we seeking additional resources to improve and develop it?</p>			
3.2. Influencing the public sphere	The organisation is aware of the policy context and public attitudes on its main issues, and is attempting to influence them based on its knowledge, experience and understanding.	<p>Are we aware of political and policy context and implications of the issues we are working on? Do we know who are the main actors involved?</p> <p>Do we monitor the policy cycle at local or national level in our areas of focus?</p> <p>Are we aware of public attitudes, opinions and behaviours in our area of focus (at local or national level)?</p> <p>Have we been able to influence policies or public attitudes on any of our main topics in the past? How? (Examples)</p> <p>Are we satisfied with the frequency and impact of our participation in the public sphere (including public debate, policy process, influencing attitudes / behaviour)?</p>			
3.3. Capacities	<p>People in the organisation have a range of skills to support its main areas of work.</p> <p>People in the organisation are aware of the areas where they need to continue growing, have interest and opportunities to access new knowledge and experience.</p>	<p>Do we have people in the organisation with skills and knowledge we feel are necessary in our main areas of work?</p> <p>These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our thematic and geographical areas of focus, • Relationship-building and communication, • Research, evidence collection, • Influencing the public sphere, policy advocacy, • Resource mobilisation, • Strategy, planning, organising, • Finance and administration, • Other areas. <p>(Same person can cover several areas)</p> <p>What are the main areas where we need to continue growing and developing our skills? Are we looking for opportunities to do so?</p>			

Capacity area	Possible development directions	Questions to ask ourselves	What are we doing well, like, are proud of	What would we like to work on	Self-score
3.4. Resource mobilisation	The organisation is considering and developing different ways to get the resources it needs to achieve its goals.	<p>Have we considered or tried the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crowdfunding or crowdsourcing (asking the community for resources, time and ideas to pursue our shared goals), • Direct outreach to individual or private sector funders, • Income-generating activities, social enterprise elements, • Membership fees or donations by members, • Local public funds (i.e. or grants for social service provision, cultural or education activities), • Foreign donor funds, • Other sources. <p>Which of these and other possible sources would be in line with our identity and purpose?</p> <p>Do we have the knowledge and skills to make them work for us?</p>			
IV. Internal governance and administration					
4.1. Governance and oversight	The organisation has working mechanisms for ensuring it continues to act in line with its identity, purpose and strategy (can be through a board for NGOs, internal codes, other mechanisms like on-line or offline forums and directories for informal initiatives).	<p>Does our organisation's legal status and structure match our purpose?</p> <p>If we are a registered NGO, does our board work according to its statutes and fulfil its oversight function effectively?</p> <p>If we are not a registered NGO, how do we make sure our organisation continues to act in line with its values, purpose and strategy?</p> <p>Do all people in the organisation feel a strong sense of accountability for their actions and their impact?</p>			
4.2. Organisational structure and decision-making	<p>An organisational structure (including leadership, members, staff or volunteers, in a vertical or horizontal relationship) exists and the roles, responsibilities and relationships among the team are clear.</p> <p>Decisions are made in a clear, transparent manner within this structure. There is space for input from members and constituents where relevant.</p>	<p>What members of our organisation are involved in strategic planning, resource mobilisation and financial planning?</p> <p>How is the decision process documented and shared with other staff/volunteers/members?</p> <p>If there is no consensus on a decision or if a decision is challenged, how do we deal with that?</p>			

Capacity area	Possible development directions	Questions to ask ourselves	What are we doing well, like, are proud of	What would we like to work on	Self-score
<p>4.3. Organisational management – finance and administration</p>	<p>People in the organisation understand the importance of financial transparency and accountability for its effectiveness and image.</p> <p>The procedures for financial and administrative tasks are documented, understood and followed by everyone.</p> <p>The organisation complies with local reporting, tax and labour requirements whenever possible.</p> <p>All financial transactions are recorded with relevant receipts, and supporting documentation is filed.</p> <p>Systems are in place to prevent fraud, such as: two signatures required, regular audits of stock, clear procedures for procurement, cash is kept safely in a locked cashbook or safe in the custody of one individual.</p>	<p>Are there written guidelines and procedures for documenting all types of financial transactions?</p> <p>Are all payments and receipts recorded in the organisation’s bookkeeping system?</p> <p>How is cash managed?</p> <p>Is there a safe or other secure location for storing cash and check books?</p> <p>Is all financial documentation up-to-date?</p> <p>Does the organisation adhere to relevant legal requirements on financial reporting, such as audits?</p> <p>Is there a regularly updated record of all physical items (stocks), including IT equipment, in the possession of the organisation?</p>			



Appendix V:

Organisational and Advocacy Capacity Assessment Methodology

Developed by Kosovo Women’s Network (KWN)

The Kosovo Women’s Network (KWN) uses the Organisational and Advocacy Capacity Assessment (OACA) tool for assessing civil society organisations’ (CSOs) capacities for effectively managing their organisations, including internal governance, financial management, project management, and effective advocacy, among other areas. The tool is used to identify organisations’ strengths and needs for furthering their organisational and advocacy capacities. The OACA tool is based on the United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Organisational Capacity Assessment and Advocacy Index. The OACA tool used by KWN was initially developed

and later honed by the East-West Management Institute as part of the USAID-funded Policy, Advocacy, and Civil Society Development in Georgia (G-PAC) project. This methodology is used in several countries to assess organisations’ capacities.

By conducting OACA with Kosovo Women’s Fund grant recipients and other interested member organisations, KWN identifies specific areas in which CSOs need support. Based on the OACA, KWN supports CSOs in developing tailored Capacity Development Plans (CDPs) to address their identified capacity development needs and priorities. Then, KWN provides in-

dividual mentoring towards supporting CSOs in realising their aims, by using a “learning by doing” approach to advocacy, organisational management, and project cycle management.

The OACA produces a numerical score, according to which changes can be measured. The tables below summarize the indicators used in the OACA. Organisations are scored from 1 to 5, based on detailed score cards that enable an objective assessment of capacities. This assessment establishes a baseline. Then, progress can be measured over time by repeating the OACA at the end of the CSO’s Action.

CSO Organisational Capacity Index Score Card Summary

#	Index Component	Score
1	Organisational Review and Self-Assessment	
1.1	Organisation undertakes self-evaluation and is able to identify factors inhibiting organisational development and remedy problems	
2	Governance, Leadership and Decision-Making	
2.1	Statute exists and is upheld	
2.2	Roles of governing body, management and staff are clearly defined and separate and all levels are actively engaged	
2.3	Leadership is shared and democratic	

#	Index Component	Score
2.4	Principles of diversity and gender balance are institutionalized	
3	Strategic Analysis and Planning	
3.1	There is a clear vision which informs all activities and a clear mission understood at all levels	
3.2	Strategic analysis leads to a strategic plan that is understood and implemented at all levels	
3.3	A written work plan or action plan exists and is followed	
4	Human Resource Management	
4.1	Organisation makes strategic use of human resources and clearly identifies their roles and responsibilities	
4.2	Labour policies and practices are legal, fair, consistently applied, and encourage diversity and gender equality	
4.3	Recruiting and promotion are based on equal opportunity principles: merit, transparency and promotion of diversity	
4.4	Compensation systems and administration are stable, transparent and sufficient to attract and retain staff	
4.5	Team development and work coordination are valued and institutionalized	
4.6	Board, management, staff, volunteers are motivated through conscious incentives and have access to skills development/mentoring	
4.7	Permanent, paid staff lead CSO (see 2.4)	
5	Facilities, Equipment and Technology	
5.1	Organisation has sufficient and appropriate facilities (premises, furniture, equipment) for its activities	
5.2	Organisation has sufficient technology and IT expertise to meet its needs and can effectively maximize use	
6	Project design, Management, Monitoring and Evaluation	
6.1	Adequate assessments are conducted before embarking on each project and include consideration of gender and diversity	
6.2	Goals, objectives and indicators are clearly defined, and are realistic and relevant	
6.3	Monitoring, data collection and evaluation are systematically carried out	
6.4	Evaluation results are disseminated to appropriate stakeholders	
7	Financial Planning and Management	
7.1	Cash controls are in place and followed	
7.2	Financial procedures are adequate and transparent	
7.3	Project budgets exist, are combined into organisational budget, and both are understood and followed	
7.4	Systems are in place to handle accrual-based multiple-donor accounting (fund accounting)	
7.5	External audit has been performed and passed	

#	Index Component	Score
8	Fundraising, Income Generation, and Sustainability / Financial Viability	
8.1	Organisation has funding beyond current year, no deficit, and plans for sustainability	
8.2	Funding is diversified and includes relationships with multiple grant and in-kind donors, as well as income-generating activities	
8.3	There is concrete, ongoing planning for sustainability of organisation	
8.4	There is a systematic schedule for membership fees and subscriptions	
8.5	Community resources are identified and their use is maximized	
8.6	CSO recovers costs for goods and services by charging fees	
9	Service Provision	
9.1	CSO's goods and services reflect the needs and priorities of their constituents and communities	
9.2	CSOs have knowledge of the market demand – and the ability of distinct constituencies to pay – for those products	
9.3	Government provides grants or contracts to CSO to enable them to provide services	
9.4	Local businesses contract CSOs for services	
10	Public Image	
10.1	A public relations and media strategy is in place	
10.2	The government, public and business sector have a positive perception of CSOs/NGOs	
10.3	CSO publicizes its activities and promote its public image through targeted materials and branding	
10.4	CSO publishes an annual report including both program and fiscal data	
Overall CSO Organisational Capacity Score		

CSO Advocacy Index Overall Cohort Scores

#	Index Component	Score
1.	Issue is timely and significant	
a.	Issue is of vital concern to the group's constituents	
b.	Issue is critically important to the current or future well-being of the CSO and/or its clients, but its importance is not yet broadly understood	
c.	New opportunities for effective action exist (Note: may be upcoming elections, new governing authorities, public pressure, newfound resources, CSO or other partners willing to support efforts, etc.)	
d.	At least a few key decision makers are receptive to the issue (Note: a "key" decision-maker is one who is relevant to the campaign)	
2.	CSO devises strategy or action plan for its advocacy initiative	
a.	CSO "maps"/identifies key stakeholders and their positions on the issue	
b.	Strategy considers ways to bring uncommitted and opposition groups over to CSO's side	
c.	CSO makes strategy or work plan with concrete activities and tasks assigned	
d.	Diverse stakeholders involved in compiling strategy	
e.	Various possible strategies or approaches to advocacy are considered, including a contingency	
3.	CSO collects information and input about the issue	
a.	Relevant government agencies and their respective roles in the issue are identified at national and local levels; knowledge and position investigated	
b.	General public input is solicited (including from women and minorities) on the issue via public meetings, focus groups, etc.	
c.	Representative input is collected on the issue via surveys (including from women and minorities, where appropriate)	
d.	Existing information and data collected on the issue is used in summaries and/or to inform policy position papers	
e.	Policy analyses, such as legal, political, social justice, or health aspects of the issue, are conducted	
4.	CSO formulates a viable policy decision on the issue	
a.	Policy formulation done in participatory (and gender-sensitive) manner	
b.	Policy position is clearly and convincingly articulated (Note: this does not have to be in writing, though it might help)	
c.	Rationale for policy is coherent, persuasive, and uses information collected in component 3	
5.	CSO obtains and/or allocates resources (especially time and money) for advocacy on the issue	
a.	Contributions [financial] collected from members, interested citizens, and/or from other [local] organisations (businesses, foundations, religious groups, etc.)	

#	Index Component	Score
b.	Financial or other resources assigned to the issue within the CSO	
c.	Volunteer time to help advocate for the issue obtained and well managed (including from the Board)	
d.	International agencies with interests in the issue area identified, and their procedures for applying for financial support determined	
6.	CSO builds coalitions and networks to obtain cooperative efforts for joint action on the issue	
a.	Other groups and individuals with interests concerning the issue identified or persuaded to take an interest (may include govt. organisations with share concerns)	
b.	[Participation and/or formation of a] coalition/network (defined as any type of joint working group) [around the specific advocacy issue]	
c.	[Coordination, cooperation and information-sharing] with other NGOs/groups that have similar interests, such as by having informal contacts, joint meetings, identifying common interests, etc.	
d.	Joint or coordinated actions planned (for carrying out the actions)	
7.	CSO takes actions to influence policy or other aspects of the issue	
a.	CSO involves diverse media in quality coverage of the issue, towards raising public awareness and securing public support	
b.	Public meetings increase public awareness of the issue and encourage citizen involvement (involving diverse stakeholders)	
c.	Members/citizens encouraged to take appropriate actions, such as writing letters to legislators	
d.	Active lobbying conducted for the policy position, such as by testifying in hearings, personal visits to legislators	
e.	Model legislation drafted and circulated to legislators	
f.	Policy being advocated exists in writing, with formats and levels of detail that are appropriate for various audiences and policy makers	
g.	Presentation of policy position uses attractive and effective formats, such as graphs	
8.	CSO takes follow up actions, after a policy decision is made, to foster implementation and/or to maintain public awareness	
a.	Monitoring the implementation of a newly passed law, policy or court decision, such as by making sure that the authorized government funds are disbursed or implementing regulations written and disseminated, checking implementation in field sites, asking members for feedback on how well it is working, etc.	
b.	Some staff or volunteer time and resources are allocated to the issue or policy monitoring	
c.	[If desired policy was not passed] At least a minimal level of advocacy methods maintained to take advantage of next opportunity for pressing the issue, perhaps with reformulated approach or different specifics	
d.	[If desired policy was not passed] Public awareness and interest in issue monitored, to look for examples, incidents, opportunities to create or renew a sense of urgency on the issue	
Overall A.I. Score		

Appendix VI:

Application Form with Capacity Assessment Elements

Developed by the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation

All fields are mandatory. Use “None” or “Not applicable” where appropriate. Empty or incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

Organisation name in English	
Project title	
Project location <i>(Country/countries and city/cities)</i>	
Anticipated start date of project <i>(month/day/year)</i>	
Anticipated end date of project <i>(month/day/year)</i>	
Overall budget of the project (USD)	\$
Funding requested from Black Sea Trust (USD)	\$
Organisation Legal Address: Full postal address: Phone: Website: Social Media:	Legal representative of the organisation Name: Title: Phone: Mobile: Email:
Other members of the project team (names, positions, email):	Project Manager Name: Title: Phone: Mobile: Email:

Innovation. Please let us know what makes your project innovative. What similar initiatives/projects are you aware of? How is your project’s approach different from them?

Partnerships. If you are implementing this project in partnership other organisation(s)/institution(s), please provide: Name of the organisation, Country, Person of contact, mobile, email. Describe the organisation’s role in the project and specify if this partnership is formal or informal.

Organisation details	Contact Person	Role of organisation in project activities ¹	Type of partnership (formal/informal)
Full name:	Full Name:		
Address:	Position:		
Phone number:	Phone:		
Webpage/ social media channel:	Mobile:		
	Email:		
<i><delete/ add as necessary></i>			

Risk and risk management². Please respond to the below questions by marking either “yes” or “no” and offering the requested details, where applicable.

Potential Risk ³	Probability of occurrence ⁴	Potential impact on project ⁵	Measures to minimise the probability of occurrence and/or the potential impact on project:
<i><add as necessary></i>			

¹ Please indicate the Activity Numbers the partner is directly involved, as described in the Timeframe section

⁴ Indicate value: 1 – Improbable; 2 – Possible; 3 – Probable.

² An uncertain event or set of events that, should it occur, it will negatively affect the achievement of the objectives.

⁵ Indicate value: 1 – Low impact; 2 – Medium impact; 3 – Major impact.

³ Please make sure you list internal and external risks associated with each objective.⁴ Please indicate the Activity

Does your organisation have a written conflict of interest policy?

YES

NO

If yes, please attach it to your email back and offer a brief overview below (5-7 lines)

Please list the main organisations, institutions and companies in which your organisational staff and board have been active in, either as staff or leadership, over the last 24 months.

Has your organisation past through an audit in the past 24 months?

YES

NO

If yes, please attach it to your email back and offer a brief overview below (5-7 lines)

Does your organisation have an operational accounting system?

YES

NO

If yes, please attach it to your email back and offer a brief overview below (5-7 lines). Please also provide information regarding management of petty cash

Does your organisation have an operational procurement system?

YES

NO

If yes, please attach it to your email back and offer a brief overview below (5-7 lines)

OUTREACH

Publicity. What methods and tools will you use to inform the target audience and the general public about the progress of the project and its results? Please check all that apply and add as needed:

Media Type	Frequency	Anticipated number of people reached	Measures to minimise the probability of occurrence and/or the potential impact on project:
Social media			
Website			
TV			

Media Type	Frequency	Anticipated number of people reached	Measures to minimise the probability of occurrence and/or the potential impact on project:
Newspaper			
Journal			
Radio			
Other:			

TARGET GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

Please indicate the intended **target groups** for this project. This should reflect the **primary target groups** of the project only (for example, if your project primarily targets journalists but some of these are women, fill out only “Journalists” and not “Women”). For each target group, please indicate how many are female or male, and the number of participants per country.

Please add or delete in the “Country” columns above as needed to reflect those countries where target groups are located. You may also add additional rows to the “Target Groups” column. An example is provided below:

Target Groups	Estimated Number	Age group ⁶	Out of which:		Country*		
			Female	Male	Romania	Ukraine	Moldova
Academia	100	35-44	40	60	30	0	70
Bloggers	25	19-24	15	10	25	0	0
Business representatives							
Citizens							
Civic leaders							
Experts/ Think-tankers							
Internally displaced people (IDPs)							
International organisations representatives							

⁶ Under 18; 19 – 24; 25 – 44; 44 – 64; over 65

Target Groups	Estimated Number	Age group ⁶	Out of which:		Country*		
			Female	Male	Romania	Ukraine	Moldova
Journalists							
Lawyers							
LGBTQ							
Minorities							
Public officials							
Youth							
Women			N/A	N/A			
<i>delete/ add as necessary</i>							
Project Total:	125	N/A	55	70	55	0	70

Please indicate the types of activities that are included in your project, as well as the estimated number of each activity type that you plan to implement. For each activity, also mark the following: 1) How many occurrences are local, national or regional; 2) The target group(s) involved (this should correspond to the target group categories indicated above); and 3) The number of participants per target group (indicate the number of people for each target group listed).

Please add or delete "Activity" columns as needed to reflect different activity types. An example is provided below:

Activity	Estimated Number	Implementation Scope			Target Group(s)	Number of participants per target group
		Local	National	Regional		
Artistic Festival	5	1	4	0	Academia Bloggers	100 25
Conference/ Forum						
Debate/Round Table						

⁶ Under 18; 19 – 24; 25 – 44; 44 – 64; over 65

Activity	Estimated Number	Implementation Scope			Target Group(s)	Number of participants per target group
		Local	National	Regional		
Focus groups						
Hackathon						
Mobile app						
Publications						
Radio show					Fill in outreach section only	
Study visit						
Social media campaign					Fill in outreach section only	
Survey						
Training/ Seminar/ Workshop/ Webinar						
TV Show					Fill in outreach section only	
Website					Fill in outreach section only	
<delete/ add as necessary>						

Please list and describe, in maximum one page, each anticipated activity.

2. EXPECTED RESULTS

Which overarching result of the Black Sea Trust does the project address? Please mark with “X” the appropriate box. Please mark **only one** overarching result that corresponds to the issue your project is addressing.

	YES
A. Engagement in European and transatlantic fora Activities which improve dialogue and cooperation between regional and European and/ or transatlantic stakeholders.	
B. Regional cooperation in the Black Sea region Activities which improve dialogue and cooperation between regional and European and/ or transatlantic stakeholders.	
C. Civic engagement, transparency and accountability Activities which empower citizens to become active citizens, which increase the transparency and accountability of public officials and institutions.	
D. Euro-Atlantic integration Activities which advance Euro-Atlantic integration processes, and which facilitate a better understanding of these processes by the population.	
E. Internet freedom Activities which advance internet freedom and usage of secure online communication tools.	
F. Media Literacy Activities which advance internet freedom and usage of secure online communication tools.	

Outcomes. Having in mind the overarching result(s) identified above (A, B, C...), please name maximum 3 corresponding outcomes to be achieved through the proposed activities. List all relevant outputs and how you plan to measure them.

An example is provided below:

Outcome ⁷	Activity name, as mentioned in Timeframe of Activities	Output ⁸	Means of Measurement/ Evaluation
<i>Citizens engage in local political processes</i>	<i>Activity 4. Training election observers in rural areas</i>	<i>60 certified observers</i>	<i>Certificates; list of participants</i>

⁷ An outcome is usually described as a finite, measurable change of behavior, practices or conditions of an organisation, system or group of beneficiaries, by the end of the implementation period.

⁸ Outputs describe the specific, tangible deliverables that result from an activity. They should be linked to the outcomes.

4. PROJECT BUDGET

Budget spending rationale. Include a short narrative of the main budget categories from the Budget form.

Other funding.

Have you applied for other funding for this project? If so, please specify the amount and the funding source.

Have you received (or received official confirmation of) other funding (financial or in-kind) for this project? If so, please specify the amount and the funding source.

If your organisation has its own resources for this project – both cash and in-kind (technical equipment, space, volunteers), please explain what these resources are.

5. Organisation DESCRIPTION

Country where registered	
Registration number	
Date of registration	
Registered as: (e.g. foundation, association, governmental organisation, etc.)	

Mission. What is the mission of your organisation? For example, if you were asked to describe why your organisation exists, what would you say?

Structure. What is the structure of your organisation? Who makes the decisions (Managing Board, Director/Coordinator...)? How many people work in your organisation? Are they employed, paid by project, or volunteers?

Activity portfolio. Briefly describe the projects your organisation has implemented in the last 2 years and the results of these projects. Please mention both quantitative results (for example, the number of citizens engaged) and qualitative results (for example, X city hall consults on a regular basis with citizens and civil society organisations regarding Y issue).

Project title	Timeline	Location(s)	Donor and award amount	Key Achievements
<add as necessary>				

Please describe your experience implementing similar projects to the one you propose

If you have received funding from the Black Sea Trust before, please describe in 2 – 3 paragraphs the **impact of the previous grant(s)**. If **organisational name has changed**, please provide previous name under which BST funding was received

Funding. What was the total income and expenditure of your organisation in the previous financial year?

Total income in the previous financial year:	
Total expenditure in previous financial year:	

Please list your sources of income for the previous two years including names of all donors and amounts.

6. REFERENCES

Please provide contact information of a funder and a partner organisation you worked with during the past two years.

Name of Funder: Phone: Website:	Name of Your Point of Contact: Title: Mobile: Email:
Name of Partner Organisation: City, Country: Phone: Website: Social media:	Full Name of Your Point of Contact: Title: Mobile: Email:



Appendix VII:

Examples of Monitoring and Evaluation Tools

Developed by People in Need (PIN)

PIN M&E Questionnaire

The purpose of this survey is to collect quantitative data in order to complement reflections on your activity in Organisational Capacity Assessment tool and allow us to measure some of the project indicators at the beginning and at the end of our collaboration. It will give us the opportunity to

see if our project is having any impact and improve or adjust future activities. Please note that there are no right and wrong answers, the survey is anonymous and the data from all participants will be generalized. Thank you for your time.

Information on the organisation

Name of the organisation

Country of the organisation

1. Armenia
2. Azerbaijan
3. Georgia
4. Moldova

A) Policy/Advocacy

Q1. Has your group attempted to influence social or policy changes in the past 3 years?

Definitions:

Social Change – Change in social behaviours or social relations, attitudes, values, perceptions and social practices

Policy Change – Change in written Policy Documents, Recommendations Reflected in policy documents

1. Yes (go to Q1.2 and Q1.3)
2. No (go to Q2)
3. Not relevant (go to Q2)

Q1.2 Please name main area / topic in which your group has attempted to influence social or policy changes in the past 3 years.

Q1.3: Did you engage in policy dialogue on this topic?

Definition - Policy dialogue means any process with the aim of achieving policy change

1. Yes (go to Q1.4)
2. No (go to Q2)

Q1.4: On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you evaluate the quality of your engagement in this dialogue? (where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest)

Definition - Quality of engagement: Did you understand the policy process, timeline and stakeholders well? Were you able to mobilise potential allies? Did you bring convincing data and arguments? Did you attract media coverage?

1 2 3 4 5

Q1.5: On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you evaluate the impact you had in this area (where 1 means no impact and 5 is a major impact)

1 2 3 4 5

Q1.6: Approximately, how often did you participate in policy dialogue on this topic during last year?

1. Up to five times
2. 5-10
3. More than 10
4. I am not sure
5. Did not participate last year

Q1.7: Did you try to engage the community or influence people's opinions and behaviours in this area?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Other (Please Specify) _____

B) Community Engagement

Q2: On the scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 the lowest and 5 is highest) how would you assess your ability to engage your community or the public in your activity and gain their support?

Definition: Ability to engage the community or the public is defined as use of various tools and opportunities to inform, involve, get feedback and support from people who are not members of your organisation / group, but who are affected by or could be interested in your topic.

1 2 3 4 5

Q3: On the scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 the lowest and 5 is highest) how would you evaluate the quality of engagement of the community in your activities?

Definition: Quality here is defined as the motivation, effort and support provided by your community to activities/events which you carry out/advocate for, including donating, volunteering, attending events, participating in discussions, sharing your materials through their networks, providing feedback on your work, other contributions.

1 2 3 4 5

C) Coordination/Partnerships

Q4: Have you worked with any other NGOs/CSOs or platforms?

1. Yes (go to Q4.1)
2. No (go to Q5)

Q4.1: In which way? (select all options that apply to at least one of your partners)

1. Cooperation agreement
2. Regular coordination
3. Joint advocacy / campaigning / events
4. Exchanged experience
5. Joint fundraising
6. Other (Please specify) _____

Q5: Did you engage with private sector?

1. Yes (go to Q5.1)
2. No (go to Q6)

Q5.1: In which way? (Select all options that apply to at least one company or business)

1. From a critical point of view
2. Trying to inform or convince them to change a behaviour
3. As partners, potential supporters
4. As a potential source of funding
5. Pro Bono/paid support
6. Other (please specify) _____

D) Media

Q6: Do you have an account on the following social media, and if yes, how many followers do you have in total?

Q6.1 Do you have an account on Facebook?

1. Yes (fill in the number)
2. No

Q6.2 Do you have an account on Twitter?

1. Yes (fill in the number)
2. No

Q6.3 Do you have an account on YouTube?

1. Yes (fill in the number)
2. No

Q6.4 Do you have an account on Instagram?

1. Yes (fill in the number)
2. No

Other (Please specify)

Monitoring Visit Report Template

Visit Details

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete the following table with details of the visit.

Monitoring Visit Dates (Inclusive of Travel dates)	From [starting date] To [ending date]	Reporting Date :	[Date the report is submitted]
Visited Projects	[list visited projects name]	Location(woreda/site):	[The project sites visited]
Monitoring Team member (s) and their position/responsibility :	[list partners, colleagues or those who participated or joined the monitoring visit]		
Visited project team members facilitating the visit	[list of staffs present during the visit / facilitating the visit]		

Visit Agenda and detail Monitoring visit Findings

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete the following parts with the visit objectives, findings and action points.

Purpose/Objectives of monitoring visit

[Please list the purpose of the monitoring visit and agendas here]

Overview of the Projects / Project component visited

[Please state the objectives and brief description of the project component monitored here]

Methodology

[explain the methodology used - Office level discussion, Discussion with beneficiaries/stakeholders, observations, document review]

General Observations/ Key Findings:

[Please include your general observations from the monitoring visit here. This may be key achievements Including any progresses and limitations identified on the project implementation. Precisely analyse the implications of the findings. To illustrate your points use photos, case studies and quotes]

Progress on issues identified during previous visit/s

Support areas/issues identified

Support/guidance provided

Specific Issues & Actions

[List the specific issues / problems that were identified during the visit. Then identify the actions that need to be taken to solve the problem. This should include the specific individual responsible for taking the action, and when it should be completed by]

Issues identified

Action to be taken

Responsible person

Due date

[list concerning issues needs further improvement and follow-up]

[recommended actions recommended for issues]

Planned date for next visit:

.....

Appendix VIII:

Example of Derogation from the Visibility Requirements

Special Conditions

Article 7 — Other specific conditions applying to the action

- 7.2.** The following derogations from the general conditions shall apply:
- 7.2.2.** By way of derogation from Article 6.1 of Annex II, given the political sensitivity of the action and due to the risk of endangering the security of the beneficiaries, visibility of the Action will be reduced or waived for actions taking place in XXX. Additionally, if such a risk emerges in one of the other countries of implementation, the Partner will notify the Commission of

the impact on visibility and communication on a case by case basis. However, in occasions when the programme is mentioned, through campaigns or in external communications and meetings where there is no risk involved for the beneficiaries it should be made clear that the European Union has provided funding for the programme.

Important: While the EU rules and procedures allow for a derogation from the visibility obligations in special circumstances and notably in situations where a high profile could put the staff employed in the action at risk, such derogations must be agreed with the contracting authority in the special conditions and included in the communication plan. Implementing partners should therefore reflect already in their application (Description of the Action) whether a derogation from the visibility requirements will be needed.

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ENHANCED OUTREACH TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS:

A Collection of Good Practices of Financial Support to Third Parties in the Neighbourhood and Enlargement Countries

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