



External Evaluation Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities thematic programme (2014-2019)

Civil society component

The programme

Key messages and findings

Recommendations

The Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities thematic programme (2014-2019) – Civil society component



The programme operates in 118 developing countries as well as the 28 countries of the European Union with an allocation of approximately Euro 1.9 billion. There are three components involving Civil Society Organisations; Local authorities and; Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) within the EU.

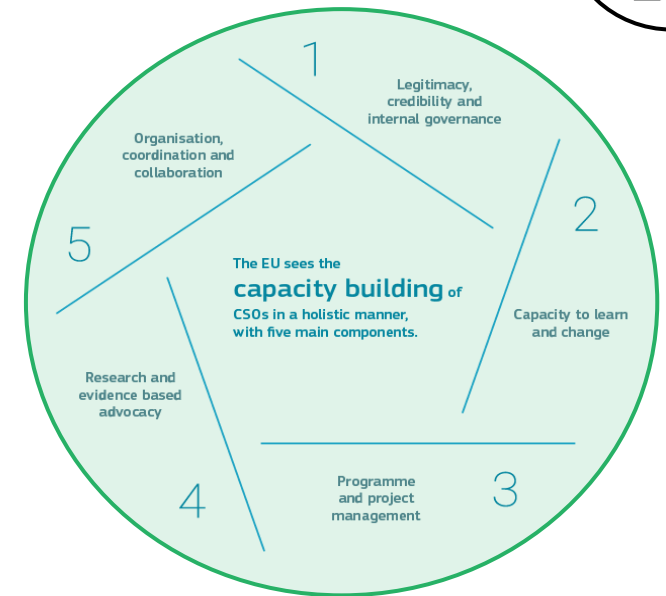
Over these three components the Programme has implemented over 1400 individual projects since 2014. It builds on a strategic engagement of the EU with civil society and local authorities. Within civil society organisations the support has been mainly on capacity building and promoting greater participation of civil society in decision making especially at local level.

Civil society - The programme responded to the three main priorities that were developed through close consultation with civil society actors:

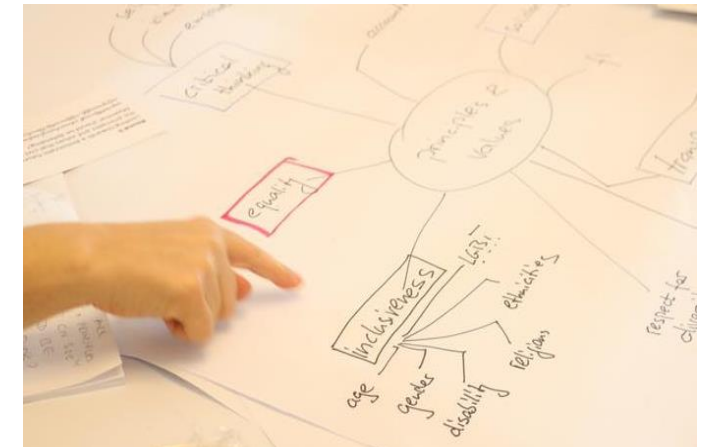
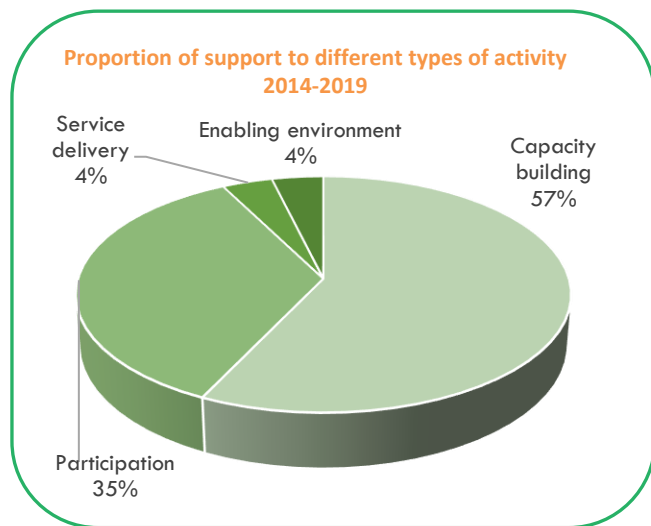
- an enabling environment (enhancement of an enabling environment for civil society);
- participation and governance (promotion of meaningful participation of civil society in policy and programming to build stronger government performance and accountability at all levels); and
- capacity development for civil society organisations (CSOs) to act as independent development actors.

Civil society roadmaps based on multi-stakeholder consultations were developed in each country to identify strategic priorities, steer the programme (along with other EU and MS programmes supporting CSOs) and tailor it to the country context. A few countries also prepared local authority roadmaps or combined the two.

Modalities - The programme operated mainly through calls for proposals launched by EU delegations, which were open to civil society organisations and local authorities. In some cases, where appropriate, projects were contracted through direct negotiation. The calls for proposals for local authorities were managed by headquarters from 2018. There were centrally managed calls for proposals and direct negotiations at the global level, awarding grants to civil society umbrella organisations, associations of local authorities, as well as actors in the field of development education and awareness raising. A number of framework partnership agreements have also been signed since 2016 with consortiums in order to engage them in longer-term and strategic cooperation.



The 5 dimensions of CSO capacity development



The structure and elements of the CSO-LA programme

More details on the evaluation methodology

Examples of active roadmap processes



Key message and findings

STRATEGIC RELEVANCE

The programme was highly relevant given the shrinking space for civil society. The programme responded to country specific needs and context thanks to the CSO consultation process and the country-tailored CSO roadmaps led by the EU delegations. The process was an important means of facilitating structured dialogue on how to strengthen CSOs as actors of governance.

The programme was ambitious considering the limited resources and given the complexity and the long-term nature of challenges faced by civil society. Roadmaps enabled a tailoring to the country context where used as intended. But even so, the consultation process rarely went beyond the capital city or reached a diversified range of civil society actors. [Click here for more information on engagement with local CSOs.](#)

RESULTS

The programme has achieved results in capacity development, policy, and democratic governance. There is evidence of projects that built up CSOs' project management capacities and to some extent, technical capacity to implement their agenda. Internal governance, collaboration and coordination among CSOs remained a challenge.

Remote, vulnerable, and marginalised groups were reached through in improving service delivery and local economic development in some projects. However, Results in terms of policy changes at the national level were difficult to identify and there is scarce evidence about the programme contribution in improving the enabling environment for CSOs.

Scaling up of good results was only rarely achieved. Major factors contributing to the challenges of sustainability and scalability include the short term and small-scale project designs.

COOPERATION APPROACH

The project-based approach and choice of mechanisms were not ideal for reaching the ambitious and highly complex aims of the programme.

Through a mix of approaches and modalities, the programme attempted to create transformative effects beyond its individual projects. But success varied and there was insufficient attention to the specific *political economy* issues at play. The calls for proposals were well managed, but even with innovation and good management they could not overcome the limits of the project approach. There was a tendency to support short-duration projects with little scope to create change, be sustainable, and be scaled up in case of success. [Click here for pros and cons of different funding mechanisms](#)

Many, but not all, civil society organisations found the EU procedures to be overly complex, compared to other donors, and a barrier for achieving results. However, some organisations, mostly larger CSOs, appreciated the procedures as guarding against corruption and helping to build financial and project management among smaller CSOs.

Monitoring was systematically carried out at project level but focusing on financial accountability rather than outcomes – programme monitoring was absent meaning there was little measurement of how the aggregated impact of individual projects contributed to the country roadmap goals.

KEY MESSAGE #1
Tailor it
CSO roadmaps- a successful strategy when actively managed for tailoring the approach to the country contexts

KEY MESSAGE #2
Measure capacity development
It's not easy but as some EUDs demonstrated it can be done

KEY MESSAGE #3
Support CSO strategic plans
Support CSO's own strategic plans – avoiding invented projects

PROMISING APPROACHES FROM THE FIELD

Myanmar
effective advocacy

Brazil
Strengthening the regulatory framework

Madagascar
Complementarity and synergies with CSO-LA

Colombia
Monitoring capacity

Myanmar
Enhancing financial sustainability

Chad
Local authorities and CSOs working together in a tight civil space

Zimbabwe
CSA capacity development and joint advocacy



MYANMAR

"Before this project, protest was our only means of advocacy."

What was done and what was learnt

The history of CSO activity in Myanmar, in part due to the degree of repression in the past, has been characterised by protest. The CSO-LA programme introduced training and exposure to a more nuanced set of advocacy strategies that have already borne fruit. The programme through a number of projects has introduced a five point advocacy strategy as alternatives to outright protest: i) make sure of the facts; ii) chose the right entrance point and level for the dialogue; iii) adopt the terminology in use by those you want to influence; iv) get the timing right; v) ensure no-harm done to the community involved.

Implications

CSOs in Myanmar report that training in these approaches have empowered CSOs and when adopted have revolutionised the effectiveness of advocacy.

Sources of information

Peter.Schmidt@helvetas.org who is the project manager at Helvetas (Myanmar) and then also Nan Myint Aung, LRC (head of the office in Hpa-An - tel 9782127638) EUD: Anouk Van Neck (EEAS-YANGON), Anouk.VAN-NECK@eeas.europa.eu



BRAZIL

“The Project brought another vision on accountability following the norms and directions of the EU. Our financial administration has improved a lot because of EU requirements. In fact, we have internalized an administrative system that is lined up with EU demands”

What was done and what was learnt

A major objective of the country road map, since its first version in 2012, for Brazil was to strengthen the regulatory framework and institutional enabling environment to establish the relationship between local authorities and CSOs. Various projects supported by the programme contributed to achieving that objective. The EUD has been instrumental in the process with continued support to the partner CSOs and their projects. The latest project Platform MROSC (regulatory framework for CSOs) focusses on strengthening the institutional organisation of the platform in order to advance the agenda at federal level, promoting peoples´ participation in sustainable development.

Implications

The creation and strengthening of the regulatory framework has been of utmost importance and timely when at the change of government January 2019 the new government threatened the existence of NGOs. It has been observed that the biggest challenge facing Brazilian CSOs today is the lack of autonomy, independence and transparency. Projects such as the development of a regulatory framework for CSOs addresses these issues.

Sources of information

EUD; EU Roadmap for engagement with civil society in Brazil 2020-2015; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-politics-ngos/bolsonaro-presidential-decree-grants-sweeping-powers-over-ngos-in-brazil->; Marco Regulatório Já! Case study: Setting up a regulatory framework for partnership between civil society and public authorities in Brazil. Europaid, July 2015. EUD: VERDADE Denise (EEAS-BRASILIA), Denise.VERDADE@eeas.europa.eu



MADAGASCAR

“the programme was effective, thanks to a good “understanding of societal dynamics while putting in place a selection process for CSOs based on their true motivations.”



What was done and what was learnt

Thanks to its amounts and durations and themes, CSO-LA in Madagascar: 1) fills a gap (e.g. EDF11 does not include funding for the social sectors, but CSO-LA funds health and social protection projects, albeit limited in scope); 2) is complementary to other EU-funded actions supporting CSOs: particularly the multidonor Fanainga (between 25-200k€ per project for a maximum of two years; vs. 300-550k€ per CSO-LA project, for a maximum of three years); support to CSOs through sector work; IcSP and EIDHR-funded projects; 3) is complementary to actions funded by other development partners, e.g. the CSO support of France, which has two programmes in support of CSOs: one managed by the Embassy (max. 30k€ per project; max. two years), and one managed by Agence française de Développement (max. 300k€ per project; max. three years). Complementarity in terms of funding is clear (CSO-LA: 300-550k€ range). This complementarity also means synergies e.g. capacity development conducted under Fanainga also benefits CSO-LA recipients; and local CSOs that benefitted from Fanainga funding were able to « graduate » and benefit from CSO-LA funding (e.g. NGO Lalana was initially funded under Dinika for a small amount and duration, and is now funded under CSO-LA for three years and 316 000€).

Implications

Several Delegations wonder if the transaction costs involved in managing CSO-LA projects are worth it, but in the case of Madagascar, there is a de facto division of labour among EU instruments, and the ability to scale up projects that graduate from one to the other instrument.

Sources of information

Eva Atanassova at EUD Madagascar (Eva.ATANASSOVA@eeas.europa.eu); and NGO Lalana President Jessé Randrianarisoa lalana@lalana.org.



COLOMBIA

Dialogue depends too much on EU contribution. It should be independent of the money support. Dialogue should not be linked to EU funding. Many CSO just sit down for dialogue when they receive money."

What was done and what was learnt

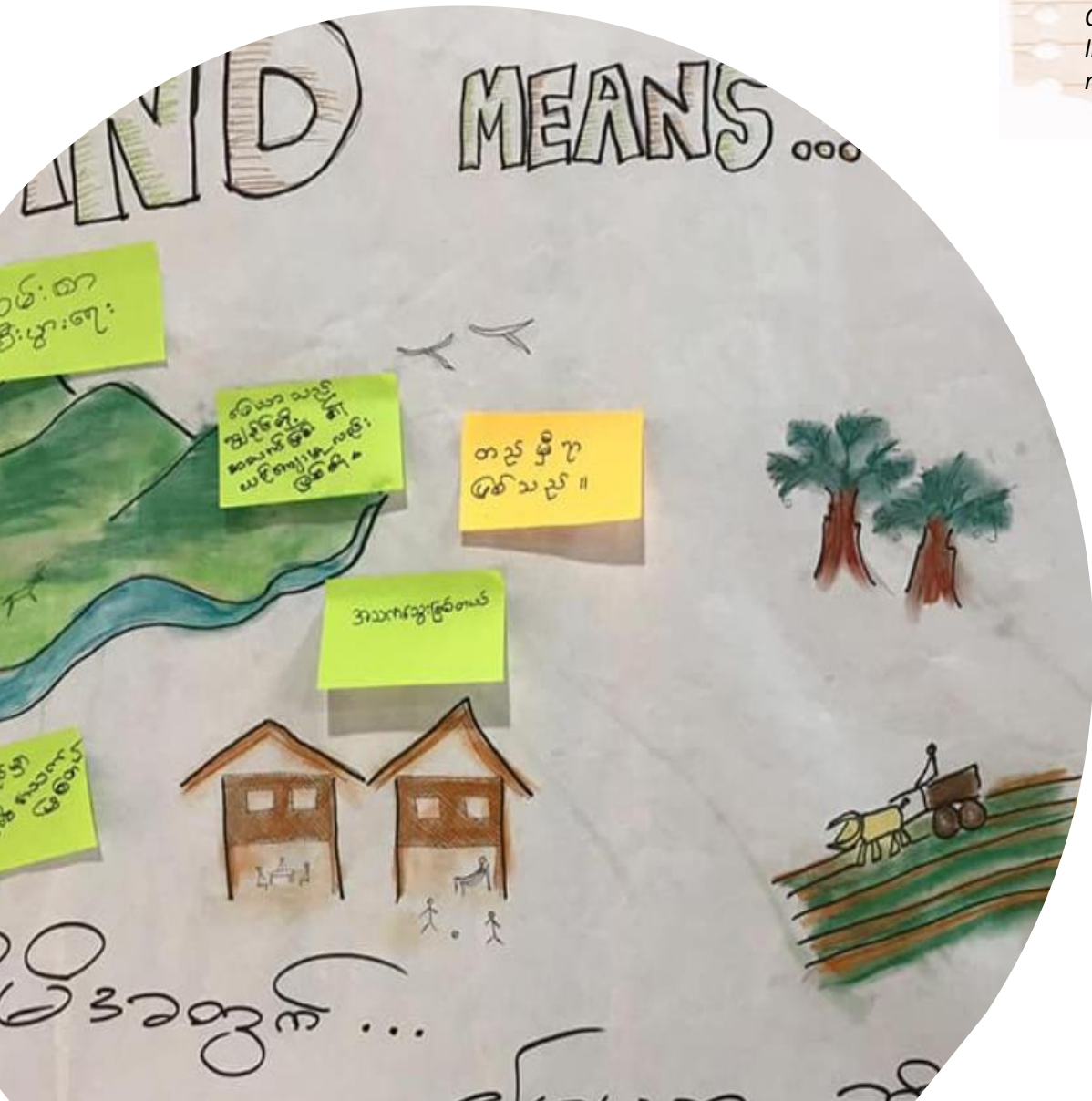
One of the main objectives of the CSO-LA programme was to build the capacity of CSOs. In Colombia it was realised that a systematic approach was needed to measuring the capacity developed. A system was designed that would allow an aggregate country view of the capacity built up across all the projects and CSOs supported. A structured set of indicators was devised making use of EC guidance and including the five dimensions of capacity. In total 62 indicators were defined that looked at both the internal and external factors. The system was compulsory and although it gave some insights it was found to be complex and detailed especially for smaller CSOs and was difficult to maintain at the country level. Some of the CSOs used a simpler version with many fewer indicators which was found to be empowering and highly useful especially when the monitoring was built into the coaching and capacity development itself.

Implications

The EUD in Colombia working with the Confederation of Colombian Civil society under the roadmap umbrella are looking to develop a simpler version that will act as a tool of capacity development as well as measuring performance.

Sources of information

EUD: Maria Mandova (EEAS-BOGOTA-EXT), Maria.MANDOVA@ext.eeas.europa.eu and the website of the roadmap: www.hojaderuta.co as well as the pages on the capacity monitoring system: <https://www.hojaderuta.co/web/index.php/herramientas/indice-de-capacidad-organizaional-ico>



MYANMAR
“The process of applying for funding is too challenging for local CSOs, that is quite obvious...It is very challenging and there is limited chance for the local CSOs to get a chance, they cannot raise the 10% co-financing”

What was done and what was learnt

The financial sustainability of most CSOs in Myanmar is precarious leading to piecemeal intervention and reliance on continuous external donor funding. Whilst it was realised that external donors will remain crucial for the foreseeable future it was also found important to start a process for seeking a more diverse basis for financial sustainability. Helvetas working with LRC, a national Apex CSO through a project known as PEACE initiated a process for strengthening financial sustainability. Workshops and training and an 11 point plan for fundraising was devised which in part has already been implemented with promising results

Implications

Although the prospects appear dismal in most countries with persistent and creative approaches it is possible to start a process for strengthening and diversifying funding to better ensure continuity and independence. International NGOs have much to offer on this front.

Sources of information

Peter.Schmidt@helvetas.org who is the project manager at Helvetas (Myanmar) and then also Nan Myint Aung, LRC (head of the office in Hpa-An - tel 978212763). EUD: Anouk Van Neck (EEAS-YANGON), Anouk.VAN-NECK@eeas.europa.eu

Key message and findings - Chad - local authorities and CSOs working together in a tight civil space

Key messages and findings



CHAD

L'UE se sent limitée mais elle a beaucoup d'influence. Et elle est le premier appui à la société civile. Elle garde la lumière allumée"

What was done and what was learnt

Both CSOs and local authorities have limited room for manoeuvre in a country with tight civic space and high centralisation of power. While civil society in Chad can play a transformative role both in vocally denouncing shortcomings in public policies and services, they can also be influential in being more collaborative and professionalised, and most CSOs interviewed insisted that, while they won't relinquish the first, the collaborative approach is showing some results. Out of five CSO projects, three are clearly built around their relation with local authorities. They are not only about service delivery but also on research, policy, and planning, and helped peer learning across local authorities. Conversely, out of the three LA projects (Moundoun, Bitkine, Oum-Hadjer), two local authorities enlisted the support of CSOs, and such support correlated with better performance than for the LA (Moundoun) that did not co-apply with a CSO.

In addition, EU experience in Chad showed that it was more effective to count on a demonstration effect in one area (e.g. some success in Bitkine) for other local authorities to come forward and express their interest, rather than to target areas based on needs (rather than interest and opportunity). This pragmatic approach is also being adopted in the EDF project to support local authorities from 2020 onwards.

Implications

Peer learning across local authorities, with the help of CSOs/donors, is a powerful approach in constrained civic spaces.

Sources of information

Anne Pêcheur (local authorities; Anne.PECHEUR@eeas.europa.eu) and Masra Ogoube (civil society, Masra.Ogoube@eeas.europa.eu) at EUD Chad.





ZIMBABWE

"Donor coordination on CSOs is not optimal.

Each MS wants its own branding"

What was done and what was learnt

The Non-State Actors Coordination and Capacity Strengthening Programme 2016-2019 emerged from the process of preparing the CSO Roadmap in Zimbabwe in 2014. The programme supported the Non-State Actors Apex Alliance in Zimbabwe and was managed by one of its members: NANGO (National Association of NGOs). The programme was able to establish a national outreach to CSOs throughout Zimbabwe. It supported capacity development of CSOs and apex organizations at district and provincial level, and used this support to mobilize CSO networks and to further joint policy advocacy campaigns at district, provincial and national level. The programme was relatively successful in mobilizing CSOs and also achieved some success in advocacy on social rights, but it was also recognized that longer-term support is needed to consolidate results and pursue advocacy in broader issues such as the constitutional amendments. Another lesson was that cascading capacity support relying on apex member contributions need to be agreed upon more explicitly at the programme design stage.

Implications

The EUD in Zimbabwe is currently discussing with the apex organizations how to proceed with a new programme support based on results and lessons learned from the NSA programme.

Sources of information

Linda Kalinga from the EUD in Harare (Linda.KALENGA@eeas.europa.eu) and the website of NANGO (<http://nangozim.org/>)



Recommendations – 6 of the 10 recommendations of the CSO-LA evaluation are aimed at the CSO component

#1 Complementarity - Strengthen the programme through enhancing complementarity with other EU and member state instruments and processes and focussing on interventions that are catalytic

Rationale - Although many of the projects financed by the programme have had results, replication and contribution to systemic change has been weak. This is often because the projects were not linked to wider processes that could support and sustain the benefits or where such linkage was not appropriate, the projects were not genuinely catalytic. [Click here for more information on catalytic projects](#)

#6 Capacity development - Expand capacity development across all five dimensions defined by the programme (aiming among others to increase the involvement of local CSOs), set up simplified but systematic monitoring

Rationale -Although the capacity of CSOs was developed under the programme it did not always cover all the five dimensions defined by the programme, and in particular it was weak on internal governance, networking across CSOs (key to any transformative effect and, in the most fragile states, to activists' protection) and addressing longer-term financial sustainability of CSOs. Moreover, apart from very few countries there was little or no monitoring and reporting of the capacity developed.

#3 Tailoring - Continue to tailor the programme at country level through roadmaps and enhanced strategic engagement

Rationale -Through the roadmap and country-level dialogue with civil society and local authorities, the programme was able, in many countries, to tailor its response to the country context and enhance its relevance and effectiveness. But in general, a deeper insight into the political context is needed.

#7 Modalities - Widen use of grant award procedures to make it easier to strengthen and support CSO's own strategic plans and reach out to local CSOs

Rationale - The ambition of the programme requires a longer-term and more strategic approach than can achieved through relying mainly on calls for proposals and individual projects that are not linked to each other. By funding the strategic plans of key CSOs and CSO platforms (and helping to improve them) a more strategic and longer-term support can be provided that respects the right to initiative and enhances the institutionalisation of civil society organisation.

#5 Service delivery - Ensure service delivery that pilots innovative approaches and has wider transformative impact

Rationale - Results in service delivery and local economic development were in many cases localised and timebound, with limited impact beyond the targeted communities. This meant that services became vulnerable once the projects were terminated and it was difficult for local government to internalise and maintain whatever service improvements were achieved.

#8 Results framework - Enhance results framework and reporting especially at programme and country level

Rationale - Project monitoring and reporting were strong but there was little monitoring and reporting at country and programme level except in a few countries. Although learning during the programme was in some respects impressive (for example in the adjustments in the MIP 2018-2020) there is scope to improve learning across the countries and at the programme level. The support facilities were underused in this regard. The programme as a whole and at country level did not use theory of change and intervention logic tools.

#1 Complementarity

#3 Tailoring

#5 Service delivery

#6 Capacity development

#7 Modalities

#8 Results framework

Recommendation #1 - Strengthen the programme through enhancing complementarity with other EU and member state instruments and processes and focusing on interventions that are catalytic.

Recommendations



Measures: [by whom]

This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- > Systematise/automate information on different instruments and programmes supporting CSOs and LAs at country level, so that the Delegation can better exploit the complementarities and synergies among the instruments. By using the various degrees available through different geographic and thematic instruments and modalities, support can be provided that re-enforces the effects through large and small, long term as well as short term interventions as well as engagement at the central and local levels and across different actors (examples of this were present in Chad). **[EC/DEVCO and EUDs]**
- > Draw lessons across all EU and member state actions at country level that are linked to civil society and local government, to feed into dialogue with government and enhance the collective impact of the different projects that work with civil society. The roadmaps are a tool where this has been done in some cases an example is the Hoja de Ruta in Colombia. **[EC/DEVCO, EUDs and CSOs perhaps making use of the PFD]**
- > Sharpen the analysis, criteria and tools for judging where projects are likely to be transformative, either by being highly catalytic or by being linked to other credible processes that can sustain their benefits. Notes on this are given in Box 2.6 in this report. **[EC/DEVCO, CSOs]**
- > Increase awareness of regional/global CSO-LA activities at country level and increase networking, and alliance building between local, regional and global levels, e.g. through a web-based mapping of all CSO-LA activities and events. **[EC/DEVCO, EUDs and CSOs perhaps making use of the PFD]**



Measures: [by whom]

This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- > Deepen the understanding of the political context at country level to calibrate the programme's level of ambition for civil society and allow a differentiated strategy depending on civic space and civil society dynamics. **[EUDs, CSOs]**
- > Develop scenarios to take into account possible changes (positive or negative) in the level of restriction for civil society, so as to anticipate opportunities and risks that may arise. Develop a change strategy for countries where change is unlikely. **[EUDs, CSOs]**
- > Explore means of transferring elements of roadmap and multi-stakeholder consultation from the EUD platforms to platforms run by CSO apex bodies where these are in place. This will enhance ownership and ensure that the contribution to CSO-led coordination of civil society is transferred to the country. Ultimately this is an element of a EU exit plan for the programme. **[EUDs, CSOs]**



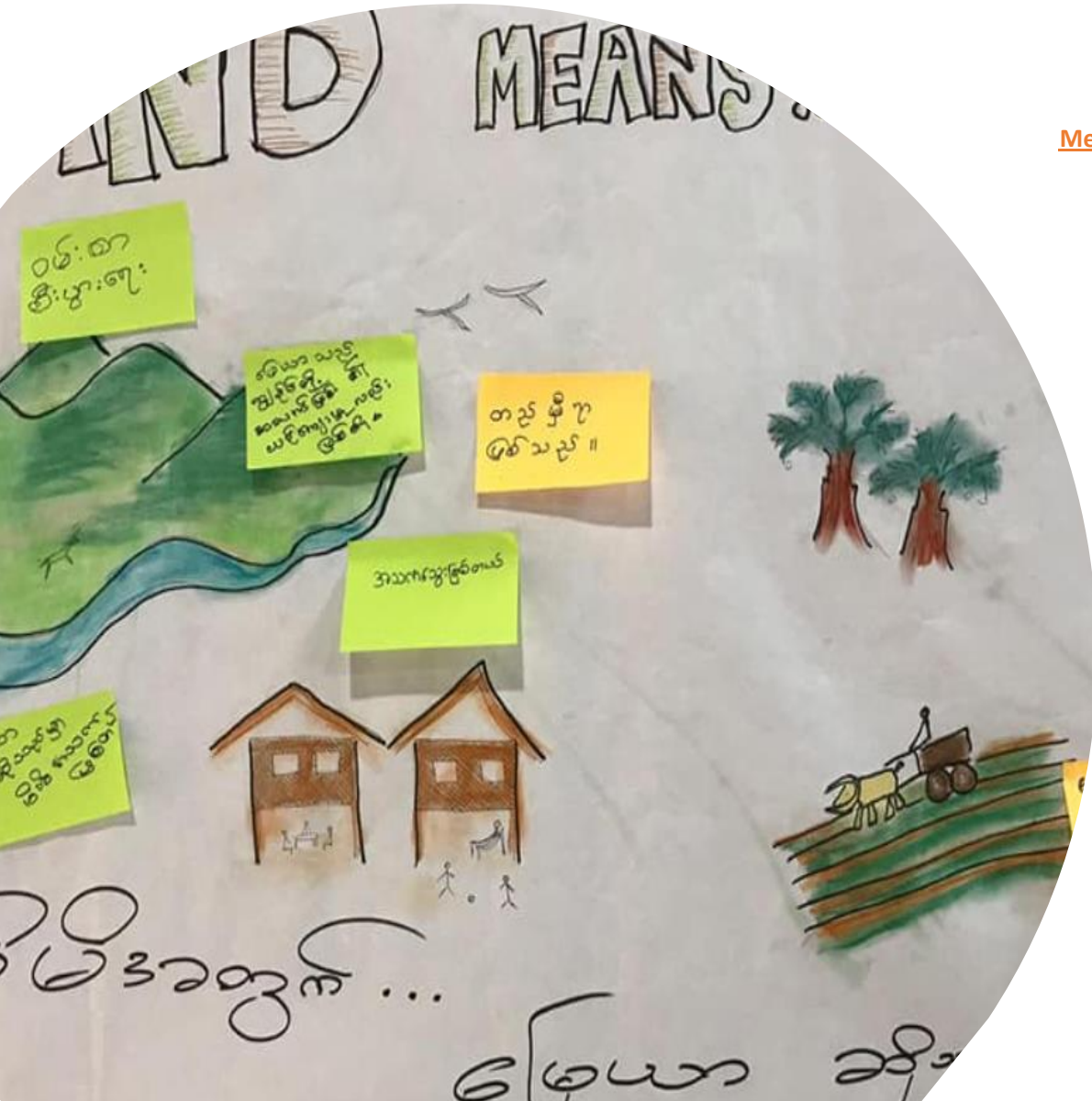


Measures: [by whom]

This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- > Calls for proposals (or other means) should promote piloting of innovations that complement and can be made use of by local government. The calls for proposals should be based on solid assessment of the subnational framework, to ensure that projects are indeed innovative and have a catalytic potential vis a vis decentralisation and local governance in the local context. **[EC/DEVCO, EUDs, CSOs]**
- > Calls for proposals should include a mandatory requirement for project designs to outline a credible pathway for sustainability and replication/scalability. Where feasible, this should entail a default cooperation with associations of local authorities at either project or country level to enhance programme learning. **[EC/DEVCO, EUDs]**
- > Where feasible, encourage and actively promote CSO-LA project pilot and innovations which are linked to – and coordinated with - priority interventions of larger-scale decentralisation or thematic reform programmes. **[EC/DEVCO, EUDs]**
- > Longer project durations could ensure that results achieved in service delivery are leveraged and CSOs become trusted partners of government (central and/or local). **[EC/DEVCO, EUDs, CSOs]**
- > Encourage civil society organisations to work openly and transparently with local authorities, and with government more generally (budget discussions and sector policies are particularly promising). **[EC/DEVCO, EUDs, CSOs]**

Recommendation #6 - Expand capacity development across all five dimensions defined by the programme (aiming among others to increase the involvement of local CSOs) set up simplified but systematic monitoring



Measures: [by whom]

This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- > Develop guidance for monitoring, reporting and learning on capacity development across all five dimensions and specify the obligation of projects to monitor and report accordingly. **[EC/DEVCO, CSOs]**
- > Encourage and incentivise CSO platforms to develop the most critical capacities of their members, for example through calls for proposals directed at CSO platforms and that include capacity development. **[EC/DEVCO, EUDs, CSOs]**
- > Where it is possible to provide core support, ensure capacities are developed across all five dimensions and link disbursement to third-party verification of performance or capacities. **[EC/DEVCO, EUDs]**





Measures: [by whom]

This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- > Review all relevant guidelines on the programme in light of the recommendations of this evaluation and conduct an anonymous survey of EUDs to capture suggestions for change. **[EC/DEVCO]**

- > Develop clarification and guidelines for how the current procedures can be used to better serve the purpose of the programme including how to support CSO strategic plans and increase the involvement of local CSOs. These clarifications, interpretations and guidelines could be based on EU and other donor experience on providing core support to CSOs, including if relevant:
 - Mechanisms including use of call for proposals to support the strategic plans of CSO platforms where these plans have a credible prospect of catalysing change. **[EC/DEVCO, EUDs, CSOs]**
 - Refine and if possible, relax procedures for undertaking direct negotiation. **[EC/DEVCO]**

- > Initiate in a longer term perspective a discussion within EUDs/DEVCO on how procedures instruments and modalities can be adjusted to better meet the special needs of civil society. **[EC/DEVCO]**





Measures: [by whom]

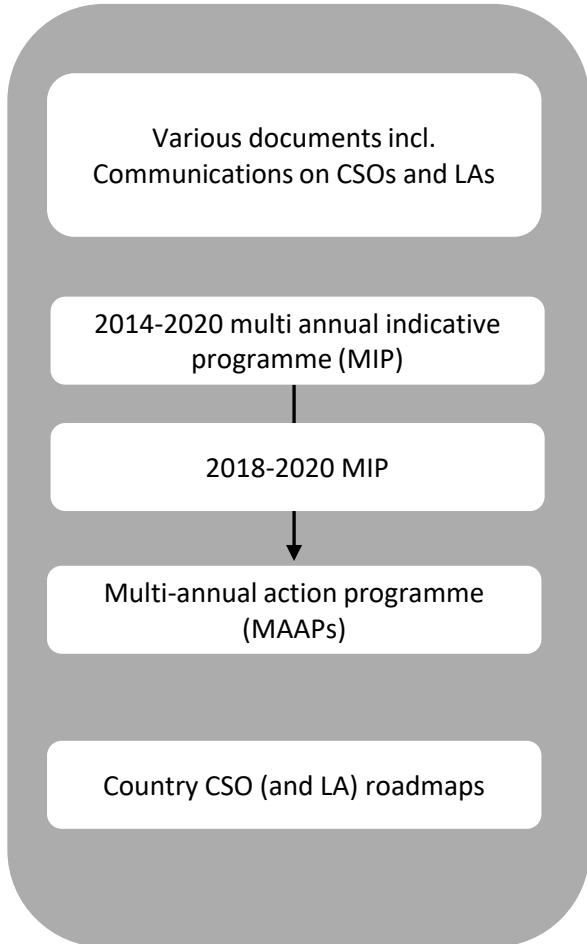
This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- > Make use of theory of change and intervention logic tools at programme and country level and be open to adjustment based on monitoring outcomes and lessons learnt. **[EC/DEVCO, EUDs, CSOs]**
- > Develop a set of outcome and impact indicators at programme level (e.g. taking the suggestions of the 2019 evaluability assessment as a starting point) that are simple (SMART) and linking to the sustainable development goals. **[EC/DEVCO]**
- > Ensure that there are sufficient resources at the country level to monitor and report on the country roadmap, if necessary by outsourcing. **[EC/DEVCO, EUDs]**
- > Consider making use of support facilities or CSO platforms to provide basic monitoring and reporting at programme level, which entails harmonised reporting at country level. **[EC/DEVCO, EUDs, CSOs]**

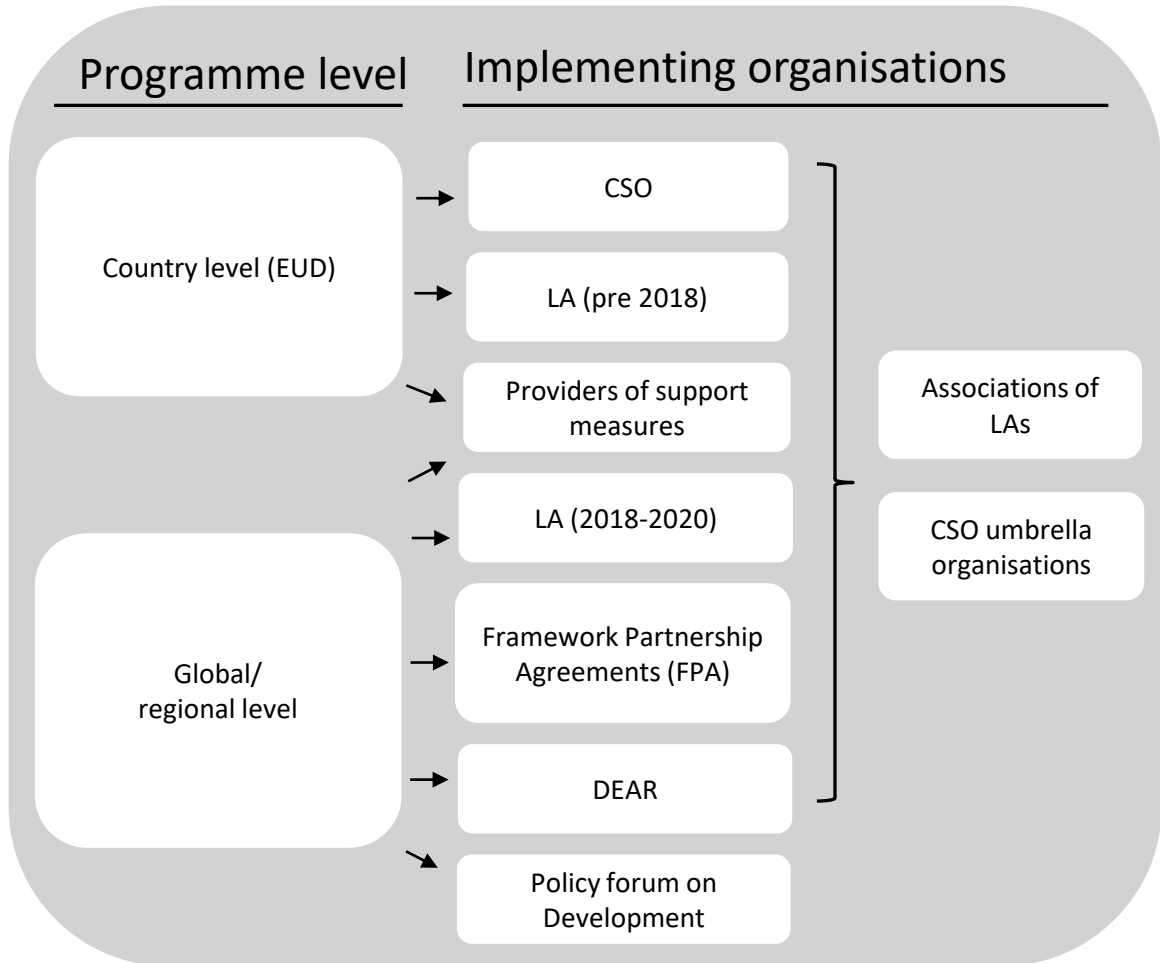
The structure and elements of the Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities thematic programme (2014-2020)



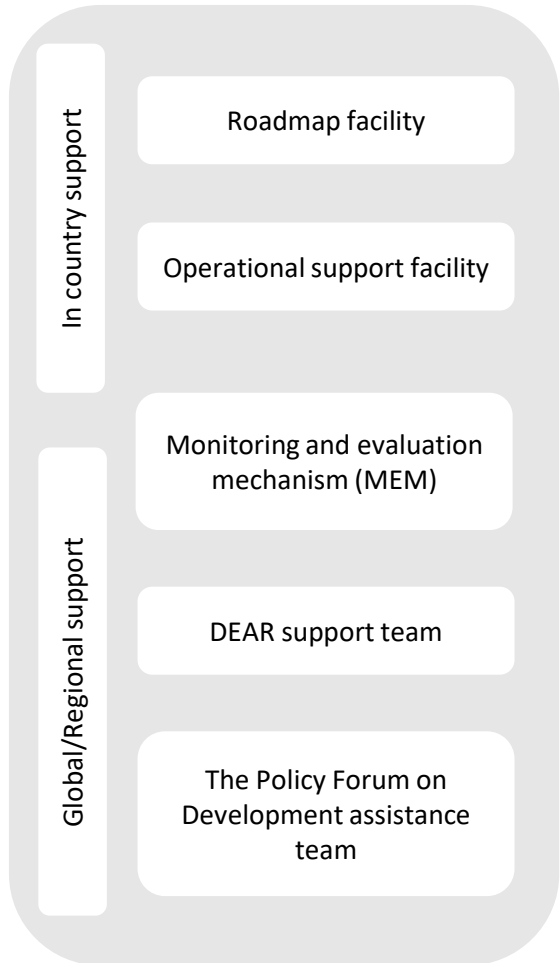
Objectives, strategies, plans



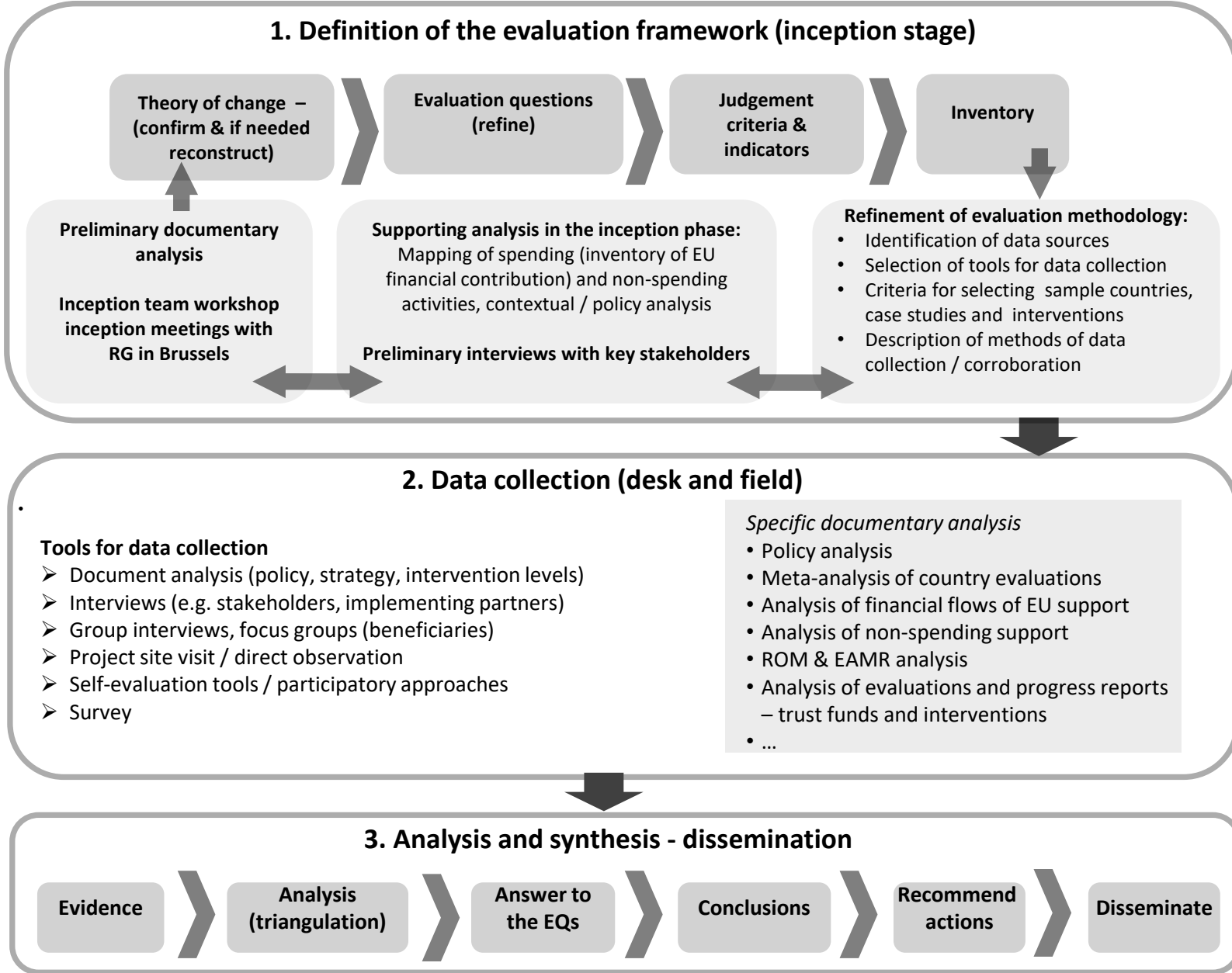
The CSO LA programme



Support facilities



Methodology – overall approach



evaluation questions ➤



Strategic relevance – EQ 1

Strategic relevance EQ1

- EQ1 To what extent does the CSO-LA Thematic Programme respond to the evolving needs of the CSOs and LAs to operate in their respective roles and areas of engagement?

Cooperative Approach – EQ 2,3

Coherence complement. added value EQ2

- EQ2 To what extent is the CSO-LA thematic programme complementary and coherent with other EU and EU Member States development interventions that have similar objectives and what is its added value?

Process EQ3

- EQ3 To what extent has the operation procedures of the CSO-LA Thematic Programme contributed to the achievement of the objectives?

Results – EQ 4-7

Policies EQ4

- EQ4 To what extent and how has the CSO-LA Thematic Programme contributed to increase, the quantity and quality of consultation and policy contributions of CSOs and LAs at local, national, regional and global level

Capacity EQ5

- EQ5 To what extent and how has the CSO-LA Thematic Programme contributed to the empowerment of CSOs and LAs as development actors?

Governance & accountability EQ6

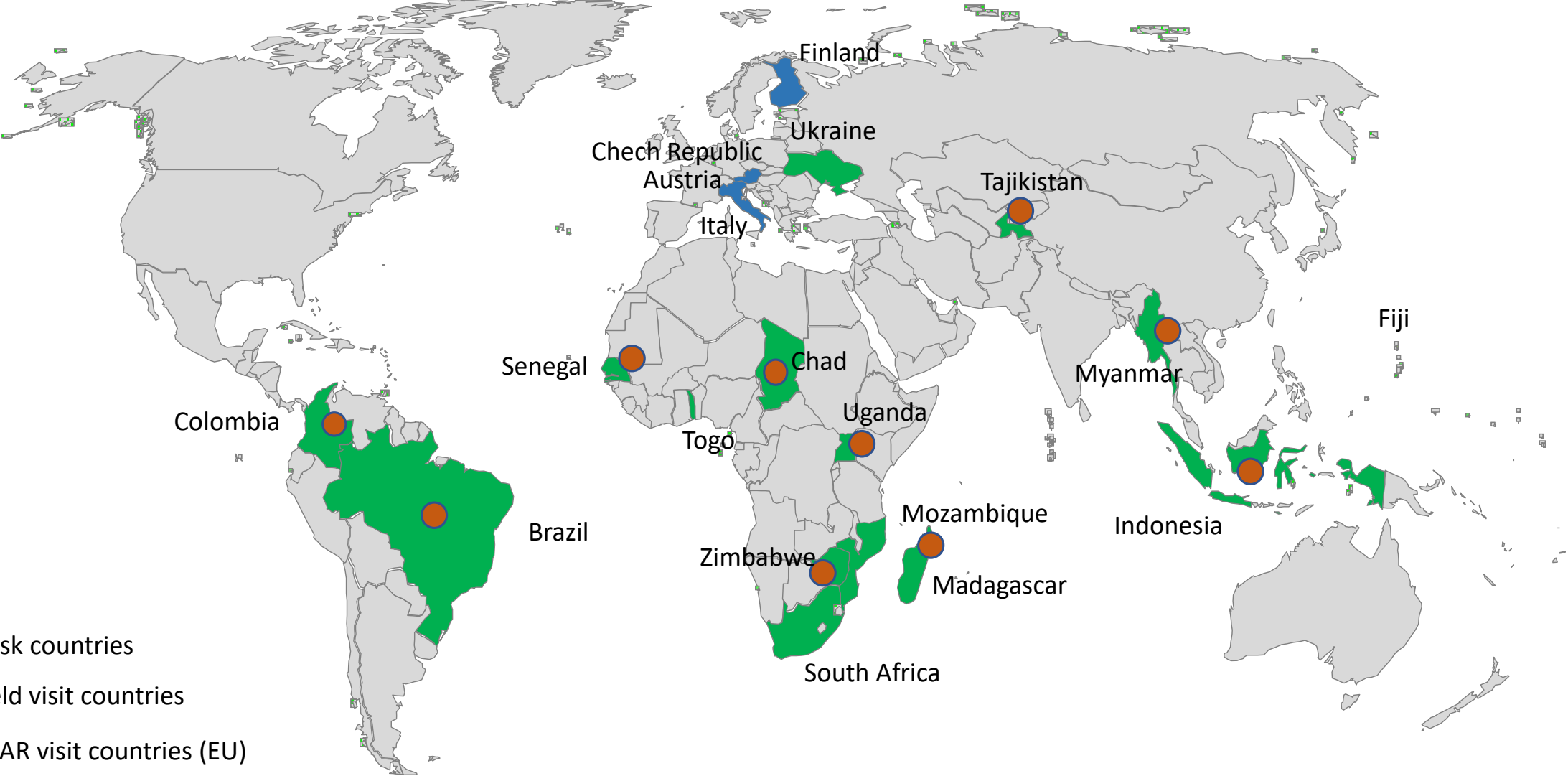
- EQ6 To what extent and how has the CSO-LA Thematic Programme helped to achieve transparency and accountability and overall improved democratic governance?

Service delivery EQ7

- EQ7 To what extent and how has the programme promoted local development through a territorial approach?

Desk
and visit
countries

Methodology – Desk and visit countries





Example of active roadmap Myanmar



Example of active roadmap Colombia

¿CUÁLES SON LAS PRIORIDADES DE HOJA DE RUTA?

1
Entorno Propicio/
Ambiente Habilitante

2
Participación e Incidencia
en Políticas Públicas y
Ciclo de Cooperación

3
Fortalecimiento
de capacidades



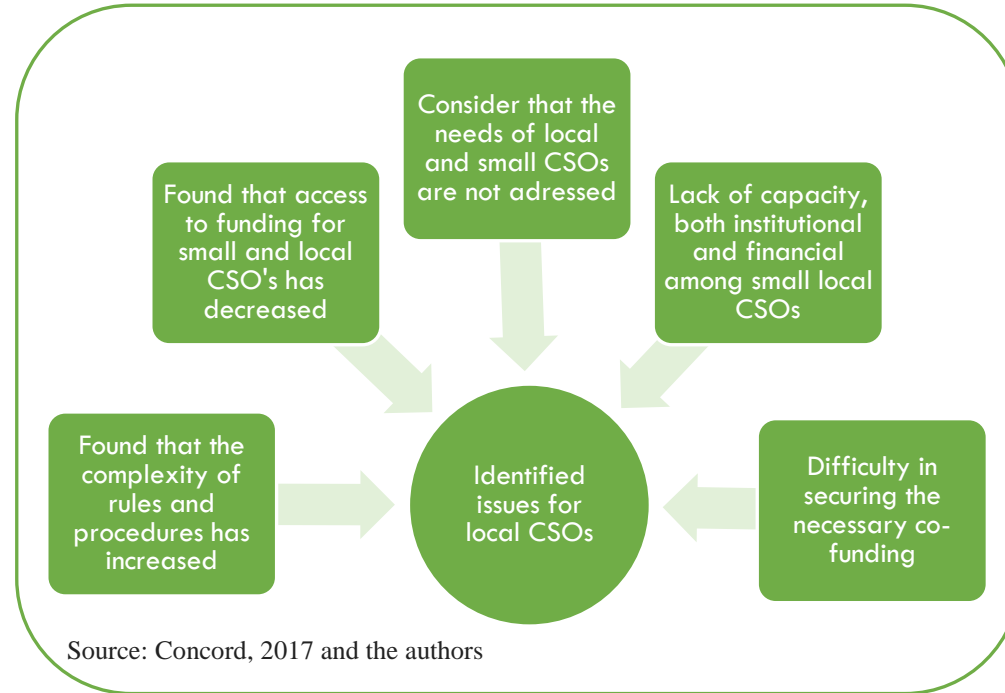
Local CSO

Findings on involvement of local CSOs

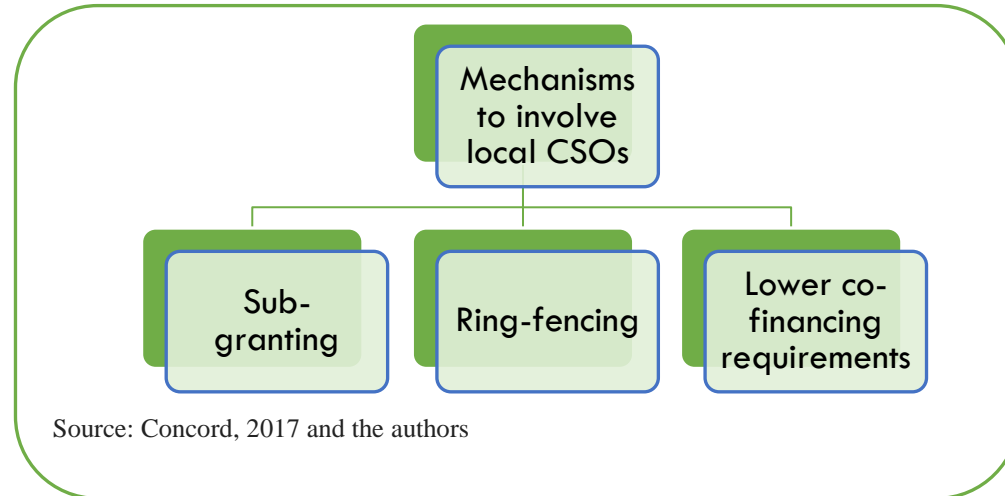
It is clear, that local CSOs face various issues with accessing funding from the CSO-LA programme. This is backed by the survey conducted by Concord (2017), where 76% of the respondents (of which 43% were local CSO representatives) found that the needs of small local CSOs are not addressed properly. Further, they found the rules to be cumbersome. This is also evident from the field visits. Furthermore, 78% found the complexity of the procedures to have increased, and in addition, according to 69% of the respondents, the access to funding for local small CSOs had decreased in the previous 3-4 years (from 2013/2014 to 2017). Local CSOs in many cases have a lack of capacity, both institutional and financial and furthermore, they often have difficulty in securing the necessary co-funding. This last constraint was one that was repeatedly raised in interviews with local CSOs – the 10% co-financing simply meant that they could not apply. Hence, the local CSOs are (often) required to enter into partnerships with large, often international, organisations. 75 % of the surveyed CSOs that got a grant were INGOs either as lead or co-applicant.

Different mechanisms were used to involve CSOs

Support for local CSOs is being stated as a priority in an increasing number of local calls for proposals managed by EU delegations. They can use various mechanisms to support local CSOs, such as ring-fencing, lower co-financing requirements, and sub-granting

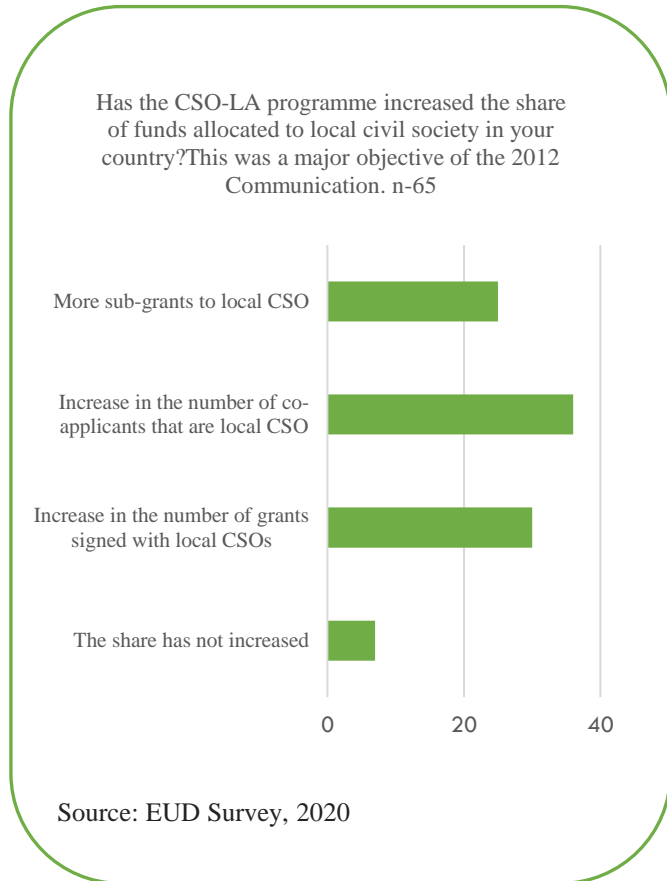


Source: Concord, 2017 and the authors



Source: Concord, 2017 and the authors

From the EUD survey (2020) carried out by this evaluation, it appears that more funding is being allocated to local CSOs compared to the situation in 2017. 44% of the respondents found an increase in the number of grants signed with local CSOs, 55% stated that they have seen an increase in local CSOs as co-applicants and 37% found that more sub-grants are given to local CSOs. 11% found that the share had not increased.



Source: EUD Survey, 2020




A catalytic project is one that can create transformation without needing to be linked to wider processes.

An example might be that a project supports the change in a regulation on how CSOs are registered/taxed, in a situation where the government has the willingness and capacity to implement.

Once done, nothing (or little) more is needed and the effect is permanent. Advocacy will often have this catalytic character because, when successful, it changes the internal judgement and value system of the decision maker meaning that all downstream decisions will be better and differently guided

Two examples of catalytic projects. One capacity based and one rules based. (click images below for more information)

Key message and findings - Myanmar - effective advocacy




MYANMAR
"Before this project, protest was our only means of advocacy."


What was done and what was learnt
The history of CSO activity in Myanmar, in part due to the degree of repression in the past, has been characterised by protest. The CSO-LA programme introduced training and exposure to a more nuanced set of advocacy strategies that have already borne fruit. The programme through a number of projects has introduced a five point advocacy strategy as alternatives to outright protest: i) make sure of the facts; ii) choose the right entrance point and level for the dialogue; iii) adopt the terminology in use by those you want to influence; iv) get the timing right; v) ensure no-harm done to the community involved.

Implications
CSOs in Myanmar report that training in these approaches have empowered CSOs and when adopted have revolutionised the effectiveness of advocacy.

Sources of information
Peter Schmidt@helvetas.org who is the project manager at Helvetas (Myanmar) and then also Nan Myint Aung, LRC (head of the office in Hpa-An - tel 9782127638) EUD: Anouk Van Neck (EEAS-YANGON), Anouk.VAN-NECK@eeas.europa.eu



Key message and findings - Brazil - strengthening the regulatory framework




BRAZIL
"The Project brought another vision on accountability following the norms and directions of the EU. Our financial administration has improved a lot because of EU requirements. In fact, we have internalized an administrative system that is lined up with EU demands"

What was done and what was learnt
A major objective of the country road map, since its first version in 2012, for Brazil was to strengthen the regulatory framework and institutional enabling environment to establish the relationship between local authorities and CSOs. Various projects supported by the programme contributed to achieving that objective. The EUD has been instrumental in the process with continued support to the partner CSOs and their projects. The latest project Platform MROSC (regulatory framework for CSOs) focusses on strengthening the institutional organisation of the platform in order to advance the agenda at federal level, promoting peoples' participation in sustainable development.

Implications
The creation and strengthening of the regulatory framework has been of utmost importance and timely when at the change of government January 2019 the new government threatened the existence of NGOs. It has been observed that the biggest challenge facing Brazilian CSOs today is the lack of autonomy, independence and transparency. Projects such as the development of a regulatory framework for CSOs addresses these issues.

Sources of information
EUD; EU Roadmap for engagement with civil society in Brazil 2020-2015; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-politics/ngos-bojornaro-presidential-elections-anti-sweeping-powers-over-ngos-in-brazil>; Marco Regulatório JAI Case study; Setting up a regulatory framework for partnership between civil society and public authorities in Brazil. Europaid, July 2015. EUD: VERDADE Denise (EEAS-BRASILIA), Denise.VERDADE@eeas.europa.eu

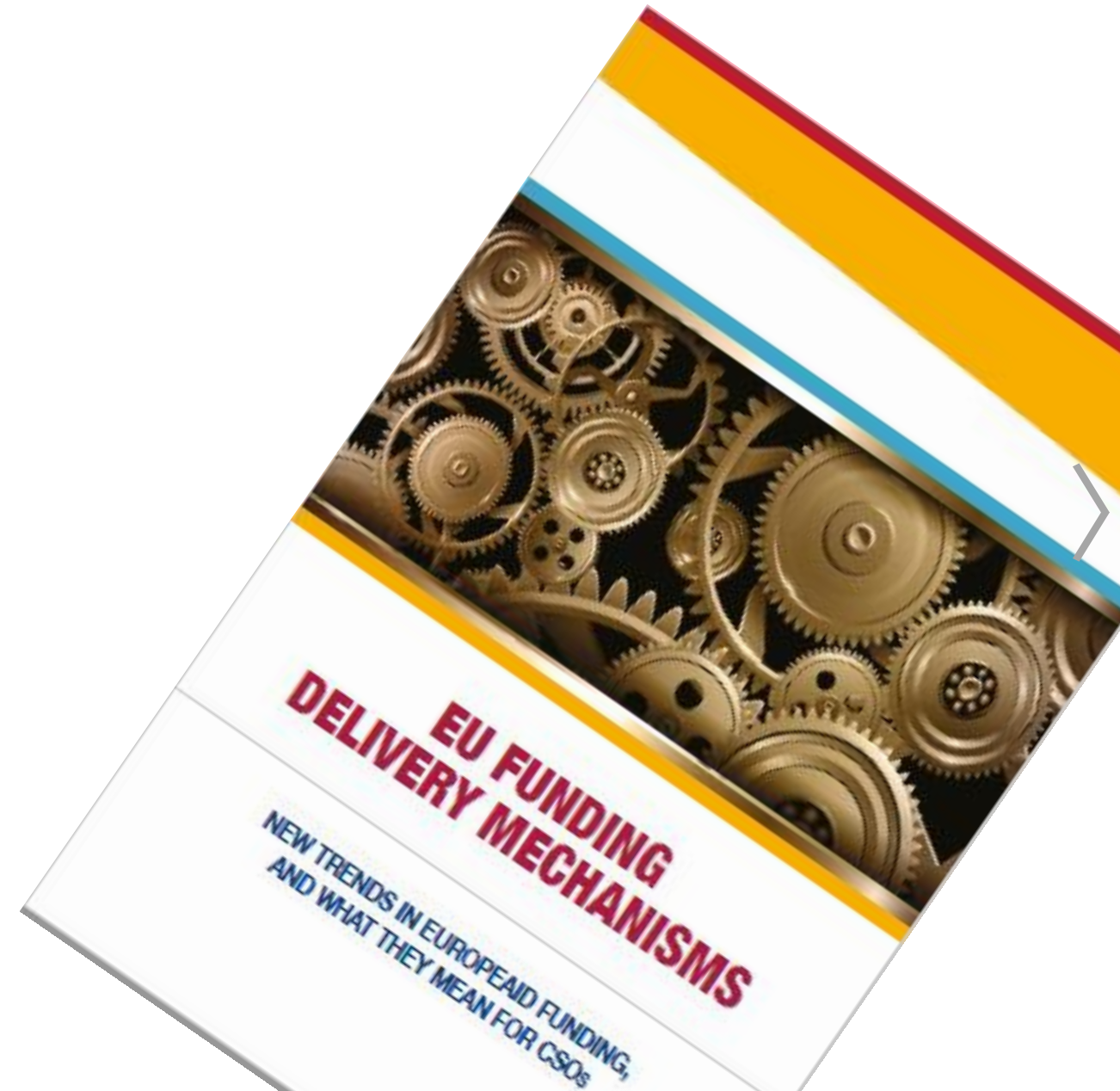





Seven different mechanisms are identified. All of them are in theory available to the EU although not always practiced widely and in some cases difficult to use due to time pressure, resource constraints and procedural complications.

The Concord (2016) study on financial mechanisms provides an outline of mechanisms seen from the civil society point of view. Operational grants and core support have much in common in that they support the strategic plans of CSOs (or ALAs) using the organisational governance, management, accounting and reporting procedures rather than those defined through a specific project. In that way they support the strengthening of the organisational systems from within rather than through a project. The presence of a credible strategic plan (or one that can be developed to that stage) is a pre-condition for such type of support. By supporting a wider strategic plan they channel resources evenly to the priorities of the organisation instead of earmarking them for certain activities defined in the project. In this way they avoid priorities in effect being set by what is available through donor funding. Clearly, most organisations would need initial strengthening before being ready for such support and thus a two stage process is often used (first initial support to help develop systems and plans and then a strongly conditioned process of providing operational/core support in line with improving performance, especially of a governance nature).

- [Call for proposals](#)
- [Call for proposals with sub-granting](#)
- [Follow up grants](#)
- [Direct grant](#)
- [Framework partnership agreement \(FPA\)](#)
- [Operational support](#)
- [Core support](#)



Strengths and weaknesses of different funding delivery mechanisms in the CSO-LA programme

Key messages and findings



Mechanism	Strength	Weakness	Trade-offs, issues and mitigation action
Call for proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open and democratic access • Transparent award and contracting • Enables new organisations to apply • Can engage with CSO that are not yet ready to contract via delegation of activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entails a heavy workload for the EUD • Expensive and risky for CSOs to prepare proposals • Lengthy procedure • Tends to favour already strong NGOs who can prepare proposals and raise the co-financing and are confident of complying with the financial procedures • Creates competition between CSOs as very few winners • Difficult to finance the strategic plan of CSOs leads to invention of projects. • Can lead to rigid projects with relatively short durations, high ambitions and low flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Wastage of resources</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ wasted CSO effort can be managed through screening concept notes ○ Trade-off between large contracts which reduce the workload for all and outreach to more CSOs – can be partly managed through sub-granting • <u>Alignment with CSO strategic plans</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider requiring that actions to be financed are part of CSOs strategic plans. • <u>Alignment with wider processes</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Trade-off between the right to initiative and geographic and thematic alignment / prioritisation – can be partly managed through use of lots and criteria • <u>Reaching out to new and small CSOs</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider requiring association between national and local CSOs networks - covering more than one municipality as exchange is important for scaling up.



Strengths and weaknesses of different funding delivery mechanisms in the CSO-LA programme

Key messages and findings



Mechanism	Strength	Weakness	Trade-offs, issues and mitigation action
CfP with sub-granting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractually engages smaller grassroots CSOs by Reduces workload for the EUD (putting more on the lead applicant) Supports development of capacity to manage funds and seek other sources of funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can direct capacity development and activities towards financial and project management and learning of EU procedures rather than core activities Can lead to short duration of projects due to the double call for proposals procedure High risk for the lead applicant if small CSOs default Can lead to domination by large CSOs and a service delivery relationship with small CSOs Large projects with large co-financing tends to lead to domination by INGOs or those financially strong Lessens direct control of EU delegations on use of funds and reporting 	<p>As above but in addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Short project duration</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> project duration can be extended for sub-granting to ensure enough time for core activities <u>Domination of large CSOs</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> co-financing can be relaxed to encourage national apex bodies to apply

Mechanism	Strength	Weakness	Trade-offs, issues and mitigation action
Follow up grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides incentive for performance Enables cumulative results to be achieved over the longer term Overcomes some of the project related weaknesses of short duration Allows a better balance between time frame, resources, challenges face and level of ambition Reduces workload on preparing and responding to new calls for proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tends to reduce the number of new and different CSOs that can be engaged with Could introduce a dependency on EU funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Insufficient diversity</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> this could be increased by asking for on-granting or delegation in follow up phases <u>Single donor dependency</u> – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can be reduced through increasing co-financing requirement in follow up grants

Strengths and weaknesses of different funding delivery mechanisms in the CSO-LA programme

Key messages and findings



Mechanism	Strength	Weakness	Trade-offs, issues and mitigation action
Direct grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can target immediate strategic needs and respond to opportunities • Flexible and easier to adjust with changing needs • Enhances EU delegation involvement and understanding of civil society and issues being addressed • Can strengthen and support the strategic plan of CSO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently only possible to do when the organisation has a unique role • Puts a workload and skill set burden on the EU delegation • Can be contested and could lead to tension among CSOs • Only a few CSOs can be reached leading to concentration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Insufficient diversity (concentration)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ limit use for small strategic and catalytic amounts e.g. for studies to leave funding for others • <u>Highly restrictive eligibility</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ relax eligibility or if only a few eligible invite a joint action ○ Focus on CSO apex bodies • <u>Delegation workload</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ use in conjunction with follow up grant to reduce new negotiations

Mechanism	Strength	Weakness	Trade-offs, issues and mitigation action
FPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can strengthen and support the strategic plan of CSO • Allows a better balance between time frame, resources, challenges face and level of ambition • Increases funding predictability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration – tends to favour large CSOs • Fragmentation- can lead to development of unwieldy or artificial consortiums with members that don't have enough in common • Risks increase as funds and time frame increase • Considerable resources required to submit proposals especially with extensive consortiums with multiple members 	<p>FPA can be negotiated or in response to calls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Insufficient diversity (concentration)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FPAs could potentially be made at country level with national platforms/apex bodies

Strengths and weaknesses of different funding delivery mechanisms in the CSO-LA programme

Key messages and findings



Mechanism	Strength	Weakness	Trade-offs, issues and mitigation action
Operational Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can allow response to non-project issues of the enabling environment without imposing project limits • Can help fund platforms which do not engage directly with projects but support others • Strategic support could be provided by national and subnational confederations and networks that know national and subnational conditions. <p>Can support strategic plans more flexibly than through projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could lead to funds being spent on recurrent costs with little measurable impact • Requires in-depth internal controls • Limited to well governed CSOs • Currently regulations only allow yearly grants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Managing risks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ conditions can be put on improving internal governance • <u>Single donor dependency</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustainability – requirement for co-financing can be increased over time

Mechanism	Strength	Weakness	Trade-offs, issues and mitigation action
Core support (new) as practiced by other donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can support enabling environment and platforms both operationally and in terms of concrete activities • Can strengthen and support the strategic plan of CSO • Allows a better balance between time frame, resources, challenges face and level of ambition • Increases funding predictability • Can be combined with on granting – through apex bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration – tends to favour a few CSOs • Transparency – not as open as calls for proposals • Risks increase as funds and time frame increase • Can be contested and could lead to tension among CSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Ensuring transparency</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ calls can be made for submitting strategic plans and track records • <u>Performance incentives</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Follow up grants – can be used to incentivise internal governance and performance