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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AAP	Annual Action Programme
ALA	Associations of Local Authorities
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CfP	Call for proposals
CoE	Council of Europe
CRIS	Common RELEX Information System
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DEAR	Development Education and Awareness Raising
DEVCO	EC Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
DG	Directorate General
EAMR	External Assistance Management Report
EC	European Commission
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIDHR	European instruments for Democracy and Human Rights
EQ	Evaluation Question
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
EUR	Euro
FPA	Framework Partnership Agreements
GENE	Global Education Network Europe
IPA	Instrument of pre-accession
JC	Judgement Criteria
LA	Local Authorities
MAAP	Multi-Annual Action Programmes
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEM	Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism
MIP	Multi-Annual Indicative Programme
MS	Member States
NEAR	Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
NSA-LA	Non-state actors and local authorities
NSC	North-South Centre of Council of Europe
OECD/DAC	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (Development Assistance Committee)
PFD	Policy Forum on Development
RM	Roadmaps
ROM	Result-oriented monitoring
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timebound
TALD	Territorial Approach to Local Development
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
WGI	Worldwide Governance Indicators

Executive summary

The programme being evaluated. This report presents an evaluation of the EU thematic programme for civil society organisations and local authorities (2014-2019) with local authorities only considered over the period from 2014 to 2018. 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. It has implemented over 1400 individual projects since 2014. The programme builds on a strategic engagement of the EU with civil society and local authorities, and on experience from earlier support through a programme supporting non-state actors that ran from 2007 to 2013.

The purpose and structure of the evaluation
The overall purpose of the evaluation, as noted in the terms of reference, is: to provide an independent assessment of the EU support to civil society and local authorities through the thematic programme; to identify lessons learnt; and to make recommendations to inform the next programming period 2021-2027. This is the reason that the evaluation is being conducted before the end of the programme. As the evaluation's objectives focus on both accountability and learning, the prime users of the evaluation are the EU at its headquarters in Brussels as well as its delegations. It is also addressed to other stakeholders directly involved in the management and implementation of the thematic programme and is available to the interested public.

The evaluation examined and re-constructed the programme's underlying theory of change. Based on this and on extensive discussion with a reference group composed of EU staff at headquarters and delegations, a set of nine evaluation questions were developed. On civil society and local authorities, these questions focused on: the strategic relevance of the programme and how closely it met needs on the ground; the results obtained on capacity development, policy, democratic governance,

Brief outline of the civil society organisation and local authority programme
Concerning civil society, the programme responds 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.

Concerning local authorities, the programme aims to promote their role as policy and decision makers in order to enhance accountable policy making and service delivery at the local level.
On top of supporting civil society organisations and local authorities, the programme also has a component on development education and awareness raising. It aims at enhancing the understanding and engagement of European citizens on development issues.

An important feature of the programme was the "right of initiative to identify and respond to emerging needs to put forward visions and ideas and to initiate and propose initiatives and new approaches" for civil society organisations. 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.

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.

delivery of services and local economic development; the cooperation approach taken, including the complementarity and added value of the programme and the appropriateness of the modalities used. On development education and awareness raising, the questions focused on how well the programme met the intended objectives and how well the actors involved performed. A separate evaluation is looking at the framework partnership agreements mentioned above.

A portfolio analysis covering the entire programme is presented in annex 2 of this report. A sample of 15 countries and some 90 projects were selected for desk review. A field visit was made to 10 countries covering close to 40 projects. Country reports were produced and discussed with each delegation and a summary of key findings, as well as a number of case studies are presented in volume II of this report.

This volume I of the report provides a summary of findings under four clusters: strategic relevance; results; cooperation approach; and development education and awareness raising. These lead to a synthesised set of conclusions and recommendations. The answers to the nine questions and an underlying set of judgement criteria are presented in summary form in annex 1 of volume I and in detail with evidence and indicators in volume II, annex 5.

The main findings across the different clusters of evaluation

Strategic relevance - Overall, the programme was found to be relevant for the partner countries and their civil society especially given the shrinking space for civil society and the tendency for declining levels of local democracy. Although the programme was global, it was increasingly tailored to country situations and responded to a complex and changing context for civil society and local authorities in these countries. However, the ambition level of the programme was too high given the scale and nature of the challenges faced by civil society and local authorities. Reaching its ambition would require more attention to the challenges of political economy (and especially which opportunities to seize) as well as to whole-of-EU approaches. The quality of civil society consultation and roadmap monitoring varied between countries but in most cases improved during the programme period. Consultation with local authorities at national level was generally weaker – although there were some strong examples of good practice such as in Zimbabwe.

Results - The programme has achieved results in capacity development, policy, and democratic governance. An example is in Myanmar, where a single project built up capacity for advocacy in more than 20 small, local civil society organisations through a local apex organisation. Before this project, protest had been the main means of advocacy. The project introduced tools that improved advocacy influence and success, including: ensuring solid evidence for policy positions; finding the right entry points and timing; adopting appropriate terminology; and ensuring that no harm was inadvertently done to the communities involved.

Capacity development of civil society organisations and local authorities (CSOs and LAs) was stronger at the project level; however, it was not always strategic i.e. aiming for lasting impact beyond the projects at sector and country level.

The programme's influence on policy and democratic governance benefitted from a whole-of-EU approach. Whilst this approach was usually effective, when put into practice, it also depended on a conducive framework at the country level that was not always in place. The constrained space for civil action required approaches that more actively identified promising issues and actors, and used scenario planning to manage the risks of reducing space for civil society or take advantage of improvements, for example after an election. Networking across local CSOs, and connecting with apex CSOs cultivated working relationships with central and/or local government and was a factor of CSO-LA success - but was sometimes missing. The programme succeeded, through some projects, in improving service delivery and local economic development. And it was especially noted for reaching remote, vulnerable, and marginalised groups. However, in many cases the results were localised; not scaled up; and their sustainability was in question.

The programme improved governance, planning, budgeting, and service delivery in targeted local authorities, but interventions were mostly

localised, lacking both sustainability beyond the project duration and pathways for upscaling of results. However, in countries where EU delegations invested in structured dialogue with local authorities and their associations, the programme was able to position itself strategically and link local results and innovations with more sector-wide outreach.

Cooperation approach - 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 approach of directly involving the local authorities as contractual parties proved much more difficult than expected as the call for proposal modalities were not well suited for this purpose. The tailoring of the approach to country context through roadmaps and other initiatives was a positive feature, even if it was variable in how it translated into operational terms. Complementarity within the EU and with member states was explicitly aimed at and a part of country roadmaps. The programme's global and regional initiatives do not appear yet to have led to synergies with the country level operations and a survey indicated that few delegations were aware of them or have actively engaged with them. The adoption of a predominantly project-based approach, the choice of mechanisms, and available procedures were not ideal for reaching the ambitious and highly complex aims of the programme. 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. Many 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.

There was no programme level reporting. At country level, result frameworks were set up as part of the roadmaps, mainly for the civil society part of the programme. Some countries carried out extensive monitoring of the roadmaps, but most did not. In general, there was little measurement of how the aggregated impact of individual projects served the country roadmap goals. Project-level monitoring was robust but tended to focus on financial accountability and outputs rather than impact. The focus on monitoring inputs and outputs and its links to tranche payment tended to make civil society organisations and local authorities accountable to the EU delegations rather than to their own internal governance structures.

Development education and awareness raising (DEAR). DEAR is unique in its scope, being the only EU-funded programme that explicitly connects global development issues with actions aimed at EU citizens. Being implemented primarily by CSOs and LAs, the programme assigns a role for citizens to play in advancing policy coherence for development: one of its underlying premises is the belief that civil society is able to influence policy-making at national and EU-levels, once citizens are equipped with the knowledge and tools to understand the global interconnectedness of key issues such as climate change, migration, social justice, as well as the universality of the fundamental values underpinning the EU.

The programme is, as yet, to develop a theory of change, and a programme-level results and monitoring framework; the absence of these frameworks has posed some challenges for the evaluation. Nonetheless, it is clear that DEAR has worked through a highly complementary set of modalities, ranging from a sub-granting facility that is able to reach EU citizens at the grassroots level; more substantial projects resulting from regular calls for proposals and which are mostly implemented by pan-European consortia of well-established and often highly professional CSOs; and a number of direct strategic grants, and which aim at institutionalising global education in EU member states' educational systems. A technical support facility, highly appreciated by DEAR stakeholders, has helped to strengthen the community of DEAR actors in the EU.

There is evidence of results achieved by the DEAR programme. These include awareness raising leading to citizens' engagements in a multitude of projects funded through an on-granting project, and where small amounts of

funding have had catalytic effects. A project implemented by the World Wildlife Fund has led to a change in the consumption behaviour of millions of European citizens, by adopting a holistic approach including consumer awareness raising and working with stakeholders in the seafood supply chain, but also by strategically using the evidence and best practices created by the project to advocate for policy changes at the European level, thereby potentially amplifying the results.

Summary of conclusions - The overall conclusions across issues of strategic relevance, results and the cooperation approach, and the underlying nine evaluation questions can be summarised as follows:

1. The CSO-LA programme was highly relevant and achieved some important results. However, the ambition level was high compared to the challenges faced and the modalities and measures available.
2. The programme was highly dependent, for its effect, on complementarity with EU, member states, and other actions. Complementarity with other EU actions was stronger than complementarity with member states and other development partners.
3. The civil society element of the programme was tailored to the country context. This was less the case for the local authorities (in part because there were fewer country roadmaps for local authorities).
4. The CSO-LA programme modalities were better suited to supporting local authorities when working through associations of local authorities.
5. The CSO-LA programme achieved some promising results from cooperation especially with associations of local authorities and particularly where efforts were sustained over time.
6. Although evidence was found of CSO capacities increasing, capacity development was generally not measured and was weaker on internal governance.
7. Service delivery projects were used as an entry point for promoting change. But they were not always designed to promote better policies and better government accountability. As a result, their impact, sustainability, and scalability were limited.
8. The programme operated under a set of complex priorities, principles and modalities. These led to trade-offs in what could be achieved in practice.
9. Programme-level learning took place although programme-level monitoring was weak. Project level monitoring was regular but tended to focus on financial accountability and outputs rather than impact.
10. The DEAR programme worked through a convincing, well thought through combination of call for proposals (soliciting proposals on the "marketplace of ideas"); operating strategic directly negotiated grants; and including small CSOs through sub-granting, as well as a highly valued learning hub provided by the DEAR support team.
11. The effectiveness of the DEAR programme was impacted by the lack of a clear theory of change and a results framework of the programme, and a joined-up understanding of what a "successful" DEAR project constitutes.
12. The size of the DEAR consortia led to trade-offs in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, and poses accountability challenges. Existing monitoring mechanisms are not capturing the complexity of the projects, further exacerbating accountability issues.

Recommendations based on the above conclusions are given below. The recommendations imply action by the EC/DEVCO, the EUDs and also CSOs/LAs. In many cases collaborative efforts across the actors would bring the best results.

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

This recommendation goes beyond the programme itself and is potentially relevant for both the future CSO programme and LA interventions. It 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). m (e.g. various degrees of flexibility, grant size, and grant duration; various approaches from calls for proposals to direct contracts; different needs for government approval and control; etc.).

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

2. Strengthen country-level support to associations of local authorities under the new programme.

This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- Where the associations of local authorities are credible partners and can contribute to change, develop mechanisms at country level to support their role and mandate as advocacy bodies, service providers and best practise disseminators. The support should carefully avoid distorting accountability links between associations of local authorities and association members and be based on the association's own business plans. Where needed, it should include support to core operational capacity (knowledge management, communication, budget and accounting etc.), and build sufficient capacity to manage EU funds.
- Future Framework partnerships with ALAs (FPA-ALA) support to regional advocacy should include support to regional or sub-regional CEO-networks for national associations of local authorities. [EC/DEVCO, EUDs, ALAs]

3. Continue to tailor the programme at country level through roadmaps and enhanced strategic engagement.

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.
- 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. An example of this has been done in Chad where a simple 3-point scenario response has been considered (situation gets better, gets worse, stays the same).
- 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.

4. Consider a general introduction of LA road maps or equivalent analysis to underpin EU decentralisation support and to support empowerment and mainstreaming of local authorities in all relevant EU financed actions.

This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- Underpin bilateral decentralisation support with a roadmap based on a structured dialogue with central and local government and

relevant development partners, including EU member states. The roadmap should take into account lessons learned from previous support and include a donor map to facilitate a coherent approach

- The roadmap should depending on the context consider 3 levels of engagement:
  - decentralisation policy; Where possible, the roadmap should be aligned to the government public sector-decentralisation reform programme and monitored through regular joint reviews, preferably coordinated by the relevant sector working group, if available.
  - LA empowerment. Where possible a capacity development strategy should be developed (some potential aspects could be inspired by the CSO 5-dimension approach used under the CSO-LA programme, for ALAs)
  - mainstreaming of local authorities in all relevant EU actions e.g. waste water and roads and others.
- Focus roadmaps, where reform programmes are not present, on the strengthening of existing subnational frameworks.

5. Ensure service delivery that pilots innovative approaches and has wider transformative impact.

This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- Promote piloting of innovations (through calls for proposals or other means) 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.
- Include a mandatory requirement in calls for proposals 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.
- Encourage and actively promote, where feasible, CSO-LA project pilot and innovations on behalf of larger-scale decentralisation or thematic reform programmes.
- Promote longer project durations to ensure that results achieved in service delivery are leveraged and CSOs become trusted partners of government (central and/or local).
- 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).

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

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.
- 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.
- 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.

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

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This recommendation goes beyond the programme itself and 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.
- 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.
  - Refine and if possible, relax procedures for undertaking direct negotiation.
- 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.

8. Enhance results framework and reporting especially at programme and country level.

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.
- 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.
- Ensure that there are sufficient resources at the country level to monitor and report on the country roadmap, if necessary by outsourcing.
- 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.

9. Strengthen the DEAR programme by developing a theory of change.

This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- Draw on intellectual resources produced by the 2010 DEAR Study as well as newer thinking as reflected in the analytical work done by the DEAR Support Team, CONCORD, and the project Frame. Voice. Report!, as well as GENE.
- The theory of change should clarify concepts at the core of DEAR and develop a coherent definition of the meaning of public awareness, public engagement, public mobilisation, and how these elements hang together.

10. Develop a results and monitoring framework for the DEAR programme.

This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- Based on a theory of change, develop standardised and verifiable indicators applicable across actions to account for results, and which provide guidance on what constitutes a successful DEAR project.
- Draw on intellectual and analytical work conducted by DEAR stakeholders to inform this work.
- Introduce more stringent requirements for how monitoring covers all partners in a CSO-LA consortium, and provide closer scrutiny of project reporting during project implementation.

11. Ensure that programming decisions are reflective of stakeholder feedback and that they are transparent.

This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- Communicate why programming decisions are being taken, including those relating to the size of consortia; the thematic focus of the calls; as well as specific aspects of calls.
- In particular, provide feedback on such issues where stakeholders have provided substantiated feedback to the European Commission Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) over the years.

1 Introduction and methodology

1.1 Outline of the programme

EU thematic programme for civil society organisations (CSOs) and local authorities (LAs) was launched for the period from 2014 to 2020. 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 over the period 2014-2020. Since 2014, it has implemented over 1400 individual projects. The programme builds on a strategic engagement of the EU with civil society and local authorities and has three main components: Civil society, local authorities and development education and awareness raising.

Within civil society, the programme responds to the three main priorities that were developed through close consultation with civil society: 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 and accountability at all levels and: Capacity - development of the capacity civil society organisations to act as independent development actors. Within local authorities the programme aims to promote their role as policy and decision makers in order to enhance accountable policy making and service delivery at the local level. As well as supporting civil society organisations and local authorities, the programme also has a component on development education and awareness raising. This component aims at enhancing the understanding and engagement of European citizens on development issues.

An important feature of the programme was the "right of initiative to identify and respond to emerging needs to put forward visions and ideas and to initiate and propose initiatives and new approaches" for civil society organisations. 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 Member States (MS) programmes supporting CSOs) and tailor it to the country context. In 2018/9, four roadmaps for LAs were started, through a DEVCO headquarters initiative, in Colombia, Chad, Ecuador and Mali. LA roadmaps were also commissioned locally by the EU delegations in Zimbabwe (2016) and Guatemala. Some countries such as Brazil and Columbia (initially) included LAs in their roadmaps thus making roadmaps that combined CSO and LA.

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 where civil society umbrella organisations, associations of local authorities as well as actors in the field of development education and awareness raising, have been awarded grants. A number of framework partnership agreements have also been signed with consortiums in order to engage them in a longer term and strategic cooperation.

The CSO-LA programme in summary

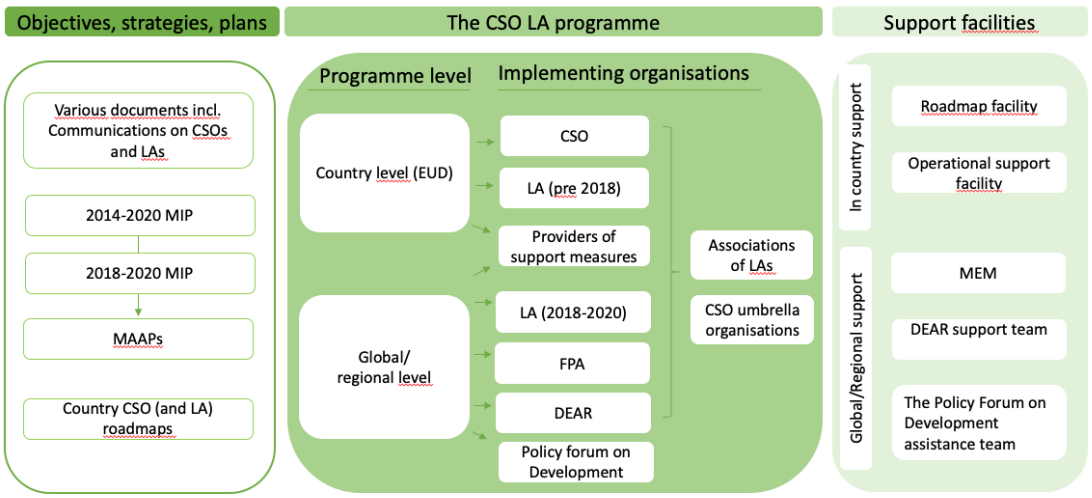
The 'Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities' Thematic Programme (2014-2020) has its legal base in Regulation 233/2014 of the European Parliament. The Development Cooperation Instrument defines the objective of the Programme as to strengthen civil society organisations and local authorities in partner countries. Where the programmes actions relate to Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR), the programme aims at awareness and critical understanding of complex development issues and global interdependence among European citizens. Under DEAR, the programme also strengthens civil society organisations and local authorities in the Union and to beneficiaries eligible under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) Regulation.

The current CSO-LA programme (hereafter "the programme") was preceded by a programme called "Non-State Actors and Local Authorities (2007-2013)" and it integrates lessons learned and best practices from the implementation of various support schemes, evaluations and assessments. The overall strategy and objectives of the programme are defined by the two Multi-Annual Indicative Programmes (MIPs): MIP 2014-2020 and MIP 2018-2020. After the mid-term review of the development cooperation instrument in 2017 and the approval of the New European Consensus on Development, including the adoption of Agenda 2030 in 2017, a revision of the MIP 2014-2020 was necessary. As a result, a new MIP 2018-2020 was adopted.

The programme combines a financial support to interventions led by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and/or LAs with a minor allocation to support measures covering a wide range of "soft" activities[1]. The financial support is allocated through two types of modalities; call for proposals or direct awards. Call for proposals is the most common procedure, whereas direct awards are only allowed under special circumstances and mainly to associations of LA or national platforms of CSOs. At country level, call for proposals are launched by EU delegations. This has, however, recently changed for LA projects where the management of call for proposals has been centralised from 2018 onwards following a change in strategy, as mentioned above. At the global and regional levels, CSO umbrella organisations and associations of LAs have become signatories of a framework partnership agreement. Concerning the Development Education and Awareness Raising, grants have been awarded through centrally managed call for proposals.

Figure 1.1 below illustrates the relationship between the different parts of the programme showing the components of the programme at country and regional/global level; the support facilities made available and the underlying objectives, strategies and planning documents that guide the programme.

Figure 1.1 Simplified illustration of the CSO-LA programme



Source: PEM

Objectives, strategies and plans - The programme is guided by various Commission's Communications and staff working documents as well as European Parliament resolutions. Two Communications are especially relevant: "The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations" (2012) and "Empowering local authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes" (2013).

2014-2020 MIP: set the strategic objectives of the programme for the first period, i.e. 2014-2017: i) support CSOs and LAs contributions to governance and accountability through inclusive policymaking at country level ii) strengthen regional and global CSOs networks and associations of LAs (ALA) to enhance their contributions to development and iii) develop European citizens' awareness and critical understanding of complex development. These objectives are split into sub-objectives. The MIP is the basis of the Multiannual Action Programmes (MAAP), composed by the EC implementing decision and by a number of action documents which display the implementing provisions per programme priority and budget year.

Programme objectives (MIP 2014 -2020 (covering the period 2014-2017):

1) **Enhancing CSOs and LAs contributions to governance and development processes at country level**

1.1 Enhance CSOs' contributions to governance and development processes

a. Actors in governance and accountability;
b. Partners in fostering social development;
c. Key stakeholders in promoting inclusive and sustainable growth.

1.2 Enhance LAs' contributions to governance and development processes

a. Actors of enhanced local governance;
b. Welfare providers (public basic services, according to their institutional mandate)
c. and promoters of inclusive and sustainable growth at the local level.

1.3 Test pilot actions promoting local development through a territorial approach.

2) **Reinforcing regional and global CSOs networks and ALAs**
3) **Developing and supporting Education and Awareness Raising initiatives fostering citizens' awareness of - and mobilisation for - development issues**
4) **Support measures and unallocated reserve**

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/cso-la-mip-2014-2020_en.pdf

The CSO Roadmaps were made a systematic part of the programme and are a key to deepening the consultation with civil society and guiding the work at the delegation. As noted earlier in a few countries local authority roadmaps have also been made. There are also supportive documents and strategies including the territorial approach to development, which outlines a key concept behind the joint CSO-LA programme.

2018-2020 MIP: The objectives for the MIP 2018-2020 are i) support to CSOs in development policy at country, regional and global levels; ii) foster Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) in Europe; iii) empowerment of LAs as actors of development, in particular at city level.
Programme objectives (MIP 2018-2020):

1) Support Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Development Policy

1.1 - Strengthen CSOs as actors of governance
1.2 - Support CSOs' development work in the field

2) Foster Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) in Europe (DEAR)

2.1 - EU Presidency projects will be strengthened to deliver joint strategic campaigns on specific thematic areas
2.2 - More focussed and strategic pan-European campaigns on targeted priorities bringing EU Development Policy and EU answers to global challenges closer to citizens.

3) Empower Local Authorities (LAs) as actors of development, in particular at city level

3.1 - Strengthen Associations of LAs (ALAs) at the regional and global levels.
3.2 - Support Local Authorities in making human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

4) Support measures

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/cso- la-mip-2018-2020_en.pdf

MAAPs: The implementation of the MIP is defined in Multi-Annual Action Programmes (MAAP). However, because of a change in the LA strategy, the implementation of the LA objective is defined in a separate Annual Action Programme for 2018, and a Multi-Annual Action Programme for 2019-2020.

CSO roadmaps: present a comprehensive, coherent and shared EU analysis of the civil society landscape, its enabling environment and the obstacles, constraints and opportunities faced by CSOs. They identify EU priorities and concrete steps when engaging with and supporting CSOs in partner countries leading to tangible gains as regards synergies, collective impact and division of labour. Future country actions will be framed by and have to deliver on the priorities identified by these EU roadmaps. The roadmap exercise is under the responsibility of EUDs. (MIP, 2018-2020)

Territorial approach: A territorial approach to local development (TALD), is driven by developmental LAs. The aim is that it could be promoted through EU-supported programmes and projects (including the CSO-LA programme) with a view to promoting economic development, social cohesion and environmental sustainability. This aim may help reconnect the decentralisation and development agendas, while aiding in translating the new EU vision on the developmental role of LAs into a coherent set of support strategies in different country contexts. Hence, the aim of a territorial approach is to support decentralisation, local governance and local development.
Source: https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-pub.sector-reform-decentralisation/wiki/2016-eu-guidance

CSO-LA programme level of operation and implementing organisations - The EU definitions of civil society, local authorities and framework partnership agreements are given below:

'**Civil society organisations' (CSO)** are non-state, non-profit making actors operating on an independent and accountable basis which include: non-governmental organisations, organisations representing indigenous peoples, organisations representing national and/or ethnic minorities, diaspora organisations, migrants' organisations in partner countries, local traders' associations and citizens' groups, cooperatives, employers' associations and trade unions (social partners), organisations representing economic and social interests, organisations fighting corruption and fraud and promoting good governance, civil rights organisations and organisations combating discrimination, local organisations (including networks) involved in decentralised regional cooperation and integration, consumer organisations, women's and youth organisations, environmental, teaching, cultural, research and scientific organisations, universities, churches and religious associations and communities, the media and any non-governmental associations and independent foundations, including independent political foundations.

'Local authorities' (LA) encompass a large variety of sub-national levels and branches of government, i.e. municipalities, communities, districts, counties, provinces, regions etc. The EU includes in this definition also the «Associations of Local Authorities» (ALAs), to be understood as umbrella organisations based on membership and representativeness at sub-national, national, sub-continental, continental and international level. ALAs may be organised as autonomous entities in accordance with the legislation in force in the country of registration. Associations of Local Authorities may be composed of a representative body elected by its LA members and a permanent secretariat.

'Framework Partnership Agreements' (FPA) are political agreements that provide for action grants for CSO umbrella organisations or associations of LAs. ´The duration of the FPAs Agreement cannot exceed four years. The partnership towards shared objective is based on the FPA beneficiaries' network's own strategic plan. The EU aims at strengthening representative, membership and actor-based regional EU and global Civil Society umbrella organisations in order to maximize the effectiveness of their work as development actors in their own right and contributors to policymaking, on development-related topics at global and regional, national levels. 25 Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with CSOs and 5 for FPAs for LAs were established at regional or global level as a result of a Call for Proposals or negotiated under a direct agreement in exceptional cases. An FPA is a strategic partnership established around objectives of common interest for the EU and partner networks of CSOs or LAS. FPAs can be supported with actions grants or operating grants on the basis of annual work programmes. (Source: Mid-term evaluation of the Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) and their corresponding specific grant agreement, unpublished)

CSO-LA programme support facilities - To support delegations and headquarters as well as implementing organisations, 5 support facilities were set up as outlined below:

Roadmap facility: supporting the implementation and follow-up and renewal of EU country roadmaps for engagement with CSOs. They assist in four ways: i) studies and assessments of the CSOs arena; ii) implementation of roadmaps for the period 2014-2017; iii) develop a knowledge generation system in order to track progress and ensure dissemination of information and exchange of experiences among stakeholders involved; iv) renewal of roadmaps 2018-2020.

Operational support facility: providing operational support to stakeholders for the implementation of the CSO-LA Thematic Programme in partner countries, thus assisting the EU Delegations in the implementation of the CSO-LA Thematic Programme (2014-2020) in partner countries.

MEM (Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism): support the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of FPAs' implementation. Originally, it was envisaged to support each type of actor, thus CSOs and LAs to develop an M&E system for FPA pilots, however, only one service contract was established for LA FPAs.

DEAR support team: aims at ensuring capitalisation and capacity building of DEAR projects as well as networking of DEAR stakeholders.

The Policy Forum on Development technical assistance team: assisting the EU in consolidating spaces for debates and policy dialogue with regional and global networks of CSOs and LAs on relevant issues and by linking these policy debates with the local needs and concerns. It should combine technical and logistic assistance to ensure active contributions of representative regional and global CSO and LA networks and other actors to assist the EC with the organisation of the annual multi-stakeholder consultation process at global and regional levels.

The Policy Forum gathers representatives of CSOs and LAs from global, European and regional levels together with representatives of European Institutions and bodies. All four 4 regions where EU cooperation is implemented will be represented: Neighbourhood Region, Africa, Asia and Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean. Seats are distributed amongst the different categories of CSOs and LAs and assigned according to the following criteria: (i) The level of representation of the actors (regional/sub-regional levels, European and global) (ii) The typology of the actors involved: CSOs (including Trade Unions, Cooperatives, NGOs and Foundations in the large sense), LAs, organisations representing the private sector (including Chambers of Commerce and Employers Federations).

1.2 Methodology

This chapter provides a brief overview of the methodology and tools used for this evaluation. More details can be found in vol II annex 2.

An in-depth and independent evaluability assessment (Landell Mills, 2019) was carried out in advance and helped to inform the Terms of Reference (ToR) and scope of the evaluation. The assessment noted that the programme did not have a robust results framework and recommended that data be collected on a set of outcome indicators in advance of the evaluation. This was not done and would have led to a long delay if it had been attempted. A major finding of the evaluability assessment was that there was relatively little desk information available. For these reasons it recommended that the evaluation should be converted to a mid-term evaluation rather than a final evaluation. It also recommended that given the limited desk information available that the major focus should be on collecting data and information from at least 10 country visits for a minimum of 10 rather than the more usual 5 days. The evaluation evaluability assessment recommended that 12 countries should to be included based on the heterogeneity of beneficiaries' countries e.g. countries roughly equally spread over different income classes and geographical regions. Other criteria included the volume and balance of expenditure within CSOs and LAs, the period over which the projects were funded

and the readiness of the EUDs for participating in the evaluation. These considerations were taken into account in the design of the evaluation and explain the importance given to evidence collected from the field work.

The evaluation did not: i) evaluate the LA projects under MIP 2018-2020 as these were not generally contracted or in operation at the time of the evaluation or ii) evaluate the FPAs as there was a separate evaluation being undertaken on that topic for the CSO FPAs and an ongoing M&E mechanism for the LA FPAs.

1.2.1 Methodological approach

The methodology for this evaluation follows the European Commission Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO's) methodological guidelines for thematic and other complex evaluations[1], which is itself based on the OECD/DAC approach. It also takes account of recent developments promoted by DEVCO's Evaluation Unit, and good practices developed by ADE/PEM for thematic evaluations.

The evaluation was initiated by an inception phase, where the evaluation team used an intervention logic to develop a single framework that linked rationale to strategy, projects, and results. An evaluation matrix, consisting of evaluation questions (EQs), judgement criteria (JC) and indicators, was developed during the inception period to guide the evaluation and was presented in the inception report.

After the inception phase a three-phased approach for data, information collection and analysis followed:

Desk phase - desk data collection and consultation
The team conducted the desk analysis and aggregated findings across various sources. They prepared interview guides, identified key stakeholders and conducted interviews. A survey for the CSO and/or LA focal points in the EU delegations globally was launched. A survey of implementing partners was considered but found not to be feasible due to the spread of projects, the complexity of the issues to be explored and the fact that the field visits revealed that many of them had either finished or staff had changed. Instead the in-depth interviews were held at field level and earlier surveys conducted by Concord, policy forum for development and others of their civil society organisation and local authority members were consulted.

Field phase - gathering evidence in the field and testing desk findings
The field phase was not intended to conduct an in-depth assessment of the implementation of individual EU supported interventions but to examine the evaluation questions through the lens of selected interventions. The emphasis was then put on the actual processes and achievements, which was not sufficiently available through the documentation examined. The field visits were organised in collaboration with the EU delegations and a range of stakeholders were visited in each country consisting of:

- EU delegation
- Other donors particularly those involved in the CSO/LA roadmaps

[1] http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/evaluation_guidelines/

- Apex CSO and associations of LAs where relevant
- The implementing partners of the sample of projects selected
- Beneficiaries, where possible, from the sample of projects selected (including site visits)
- Government bodies including local governments, Ministries of local government (at central level) and authorities that oversee or are involved in civil society.

A first piloting mission was undertaken to Myanmar in December 2019, which established a template for the remaining missions.

At the end of the field missions, the evaluators provided feedback on preliminary findings to the EU delegations of the visited countries. Summary of the country notes and case studies are provided in vol II annex 6.

Synthesis phase - final analysis and reporting

The team conducted post-mission analysis and follow-up to fill any gaps in information and triangulation. The findings were discussed with relevant EU managers. The team also presented the findings concerning CSOs of the field missions in the Forum of EU-Delegation focal points for Human Rights, Democracy and Civil Society in Brussels (February 2020). This allowed the findings to be tested and discussed both at the larger forum but also individually with focal points and the relevant DEVCO units.

Reference group meetings were held at critical points such as the inception phase, the field phase and drafting reporting. Throughout most of the process where it was possible a weekly meeting was conducted with the evaluation unit manager to review and trouble shoot issues, prepare for reference group meetings, test findings and ensure momentum given the tight deadlines. This was a new process and found an invaluable input for the preparation of the final report.

To collect and analyse data the team used a variety of tools for the different levels of analysis. The tools were primarily:

Table 1.1 Evaluation tools

Desk	• Context and literature review (largely done through the evaluability assessment) • Portfolio analysis • Electronic survey • Interviews of key informants • Indicators and judgement criteria analysis
Field	• Interviews of key informants • Focus group discussion • Case study (to provide a narrative of impact, transformative change and lessons learnt) • Physical site visit • Indicators and judgement criteria analysis – country level findings
Synthesis	• Interviews of key informants • Evaluation question findings based on all earlier analysis

The mix of tools enabled the evaluation team to collect the required data for the indicator level and allowed the team to triangulate the information from different sources to validate (or invalidate) the judgment criteria. The key findings were then synthesised across a variety of sources and triangulated by corroborating them with alternative sources or data types. The evidence base was ranked at judgement criteria and evaluation question level and was guided by the following ranking; strong (range of evidence sources /good triangulation); more than satisfactory (at least two different sources of evidence); indicative but not conclusive (only one evidence source of good quality) and weak (no triangulation and/or evidence is limited to a single source).

1.2.2 Selection of countries and interventions – the sample

To answer the evaluation questions an in-depth analysis of a selection of interventions in a limited number of countries was made. 15 countries were selected, of which 10 were visited. In addition, four countries in Europe were selected[2] for DEAR (see figure 1.2). The selection of countries was based on the previously mentioned evaluability assessment (Landell Mills, 2019) and discussions with relevant DEVCO units (A5/C5). The 10 visit countries covered a broad spectrum of low income, middle income, and graduated countries, furthermore, they represented a wide geographical coverage. More details can be found in vol II annex 2.

After the selection of countries, the evaluation team selected 4-6 specific interventions in each of the 15 countries. The interventions were selected based on various criteria to ensure a balance of CSO and LA projects, older and newer projects, insightfulness, data availability and logistical concerns. For the DEAR sample, the criteria for selecting projects are similar to the above mentioned.

Table 1.2 shows the project sample compared to the programme. More information about the sample is found in vol II annex 2.

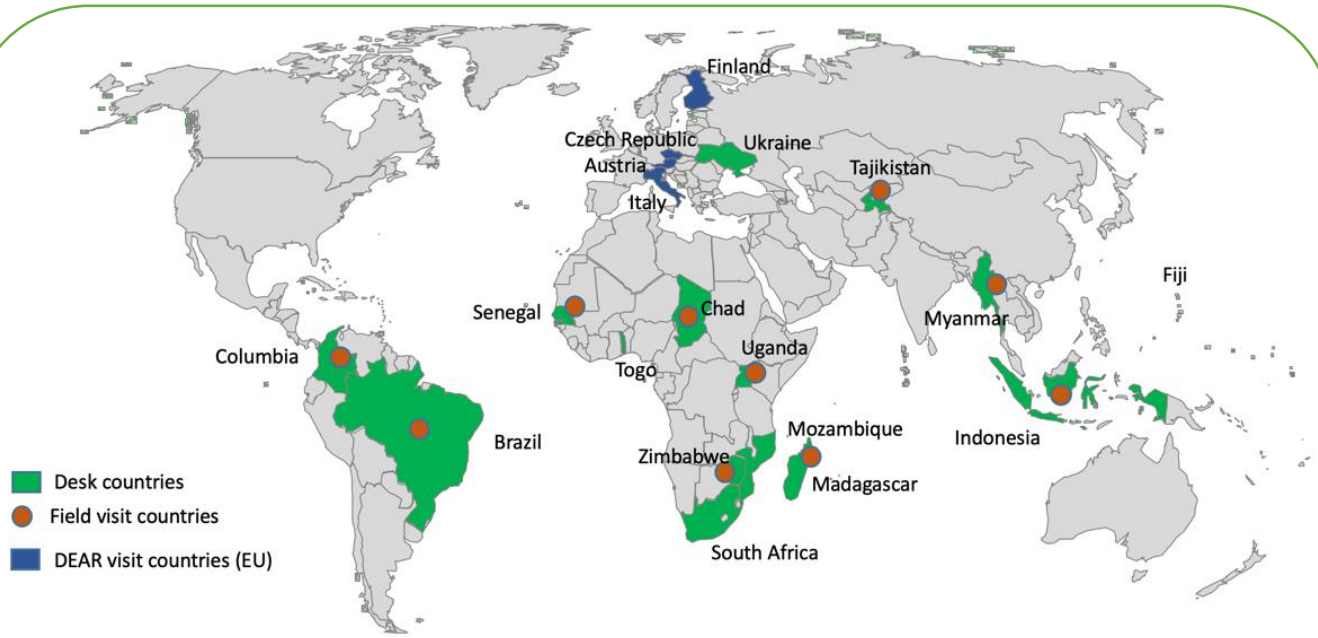
Table 1.2 LA, CSO and DEAR projects total and sample.

CSO / LA / DEAR	Total CSO-LA programme	Desk sample	Field sample
LA Projects	251	23	17
LA Countries	78	13	9
CSO Projects	1148	46	35
CSO countries	118	15	10
DEAR projects	44	8	8
DEAR countries	Multi-country	4	4

Source: DEVCO B2 (now A5 and C5) Database and authors

[2] 2 of the 4 countries were not visited physically due to the outbreak of the Corona virus, instead extensive phone interviews were made.

Figure 1.2 Desk and visit countries



Source: the authors

1.2.3 Limitations

The main limitations are summarised in table 1.3 below:

Table 1.3 Main limitations

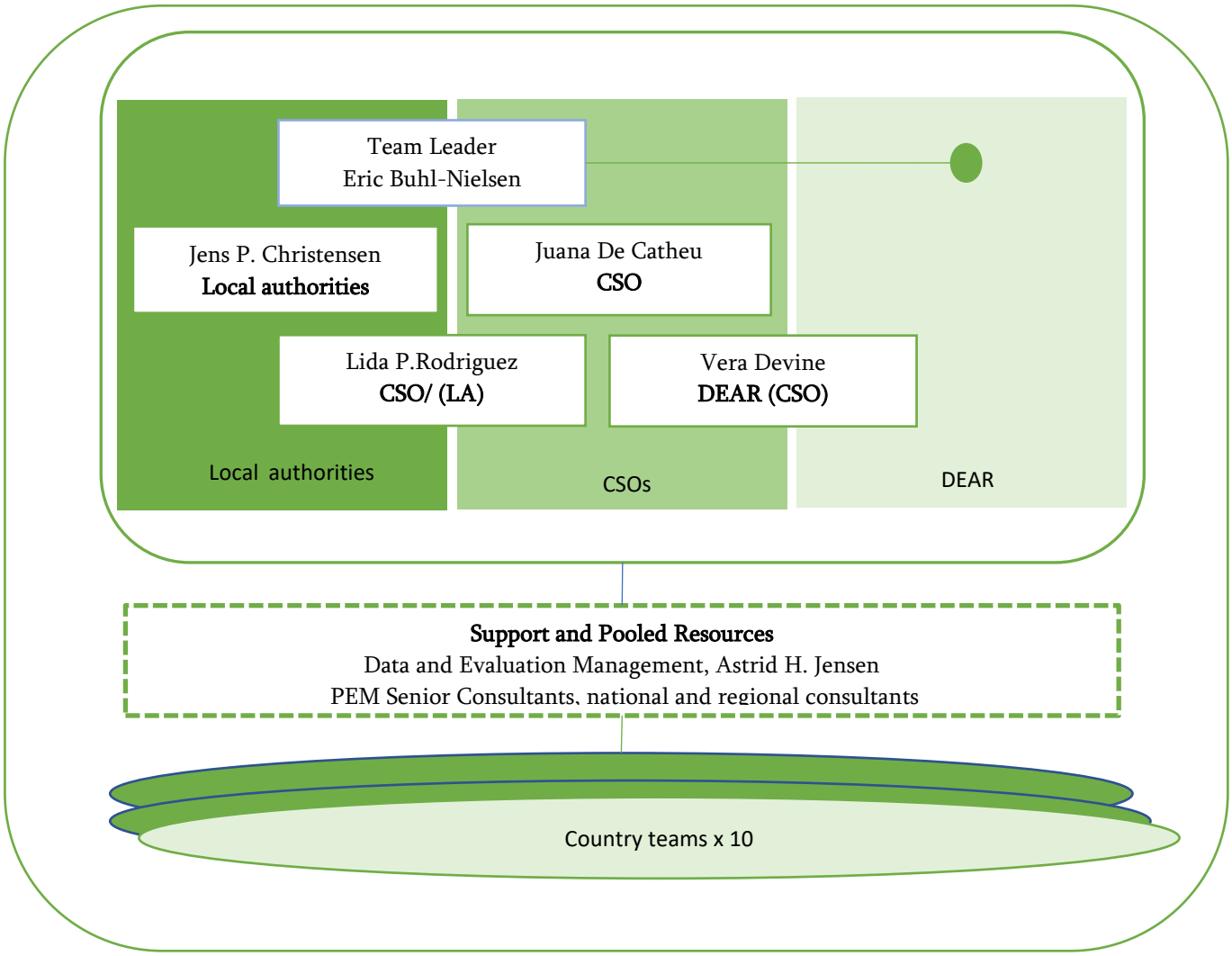
Topic	Limitation
Data	Constraints in obtaining data on all the sample projects as noted in the evaluability assessment. In some cases, the confidential nature of some projects makes this more difficult. (Here the mitigating action is to make best use of already collected data and focus on field work and meet the relevant people for verbal exchange where copies of documents cannot be obtained.) In case of DEAR, during the interview phase, it was a challenge to identify stakeholders that were not involved in the implementation of DEAR funds, and who would have been able to offer an unbiased perspective of the programme.
Complexity	It was difficult to balance the need for both breadth and depth of a complex evaluation where there have been changes during the programming period and multiple countries and stakeholders, which are not homogenous. Complexity also occurred due to the need to evaluate the results of policy and political dialogue/activities, which are less tangible than programme results, and difficult to attribute. (Here the mitigating action has been to focus on narrowing the evaluation questions and judgement criteria to the topics that are the highest priority and where clear answers are likely to be obtained. An additional key mitigation action, especially where evidence of impacts and transformative effects was difficult to find, was the use of a case study at the country level as a narrative to illustrate the process of change and influencing factors.)
Sensitivity and ethical considerations	Evaluating results related to the engagement of civil society and local government actors in shrinking spaces/adverse environments can be politically sensitive. (Here the mitigating actions was to use a combination of anonymous surveys and ensuring that statements were balanced, and that different views were taken into consideration, and, when necessary, highlighted in the report. The team used coding to protect the sources of information, hence their statements were not traceable. Further, in countries with fragile and conflict affected situations such as Chad, Myanmar and Colombia the team ensured that no harm was done to any communities or any implementing partners – in part this was done through making quotations anonymous and publishing summaries of the country notes rather than all the details. The team asked the EUD to endorse and check the sampled project to ensure that they were not politically sensitive).
Results framework	The programme was designed with a simple output centred results framework. The indicators were not monitored in practice. The evaluability assessment proposed new indicators that should be measured before the evaluation but that was not done and in reality, it would have been complex and time consuming. Therefore, one cannot use the programmes own results framework. Instead as a mitigating measure, indicators were identified where it was possible to find other sources of data. This mitigation also implies that the evaluation complexity and scope were simplified in order to allow for the collection of this data (e.g. via surveys and scattered reports) and to take account of areas of the programme where it was very difficult to measure in practice.
Corona Virus	The Corona Virus interrupted two of the four field visits for the DEAR component. This was mitigated by extensive phone interviews.

1.2.4 Evaluation team

The team was structured and organised around a core team of experts that provided an overlap in the three component areas of LA - CSO - DEAR as shown in figure 1.3 below. The overlap ensured that the components were not treated in isolation as well as providing a high degree of flexibility during the evaluation to work across the components when needed. The team had strong and continuous professional backup at country/regional level for the field work, as well as an in-house support team. The support and pooled resources included an experienced project manager and other in-house PEM

Senior experts in an advisory role – they brought in broad perspectives from the wide portfolio of PEM and DEVCO evaluations on different sectors, themes, countries and regions, as well as extended understanding of the Evaluation Unit's expectations.

Figure 1.3 Team composition and expertise



1.2.5 Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions were developed to be able to test whether and how the assumptions implicit in the theory of change have worked out in practice. The ToR pointed to a number of key issues including i) the relevance of the EU's cooperation strategies; ii) the results achieved; iii) the consistency between regional and national programming; iv) the value added by EU interventions and v) the coordination, complementary and coherence across EU/Member State/other development partner interventions. The below table gives an overview of the nine evaluation questions.

Table 1.4 Overview of Evaluation questions

EQ #	Evaluation question
EQ 1 -Relevance	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?
EQ 2 – Added value, coherence, complementarity	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?
EQ 3 - Process	To what extent has the operation procedures of the CSO-LA Thematic Programme contributed to the achievement of the objectives?
EQ 4 - Policy	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?
EQ 5 - Capacity	To what extent and how has the CSO-LA Thematic Programme contributed to the empowerment of CSOs and LAs as development actors?
EQ 6 - Governance	To what extent and how has the CSO-LA Thematic Programme helped to achieve transparency and accountability and overall improved democratic governance?
EQ 7 - Services	To what extent and how has the programme promoted local development through a territorial approach?
EQ 8 – DEAR actors	To what extent and how have CSOs and LAs proven to be effective actors to implement the EU DEAR strategy and achieve the EU DEAR objectives?
EQ 9 – DEAR objectives	To what extent and how has the CSO-LA Thematic Programme helped to achieve EU DEAR objectives?

A brief overview of the theory of change and its links to the evaluation questions is given in Annex 2 (of volume 1). A detailed evaluation matrix with the evaluation questions, judgement criteria and indicators is presented in Volume II (annex 5) This annex outlines the methodology, underlying assumptions and provides a full rationale for the questions, judgement criteria and indicators.

1.2.6 Structure of this report

The report is structured in two volumes. Volume 1 presents a brief overview of the programme and methodology (chapter 1). It then synthesises the answers to the evaluation questions into four clusters (chapter 2):

- Strategic relevance – covers evaluation question 1
- Results – covers evaluation questions 4,5,6,7
- Cooperation approach – covers evaluation questions 2 and 3
- DEAR – covers evaluation questions 8 and 9

Finally, it presents conclusions and recommendations (chapter 3). Annex 1 of this volume provides an overview of findings at the level of evaluation question and judgement criteria. The full set of findings at evaluation question, judgement criteria and indicator level with links to the evidence base are presented in volume II (annex 5). Annex II of this volume, as noted above expands on the methodology and presents the underlying theory of change of the programme, its assumptions and

the link to the evaluation questions. Annex 3 of volume I provides a diagrammatic overview of the link between evaluation question findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Volume 2 presents:

- The ToR (annex 1)
- The detailed methodology (annex 2)
- A list of people met (annex 3)
- The survey conducted of EU delegations (annex 4)
- The answers to evaluation questions, judgement criteria and indicators (annex 5)
- Country note summaries and case studies (annex 6)

2 Main findings

2.1 Strategic relevance

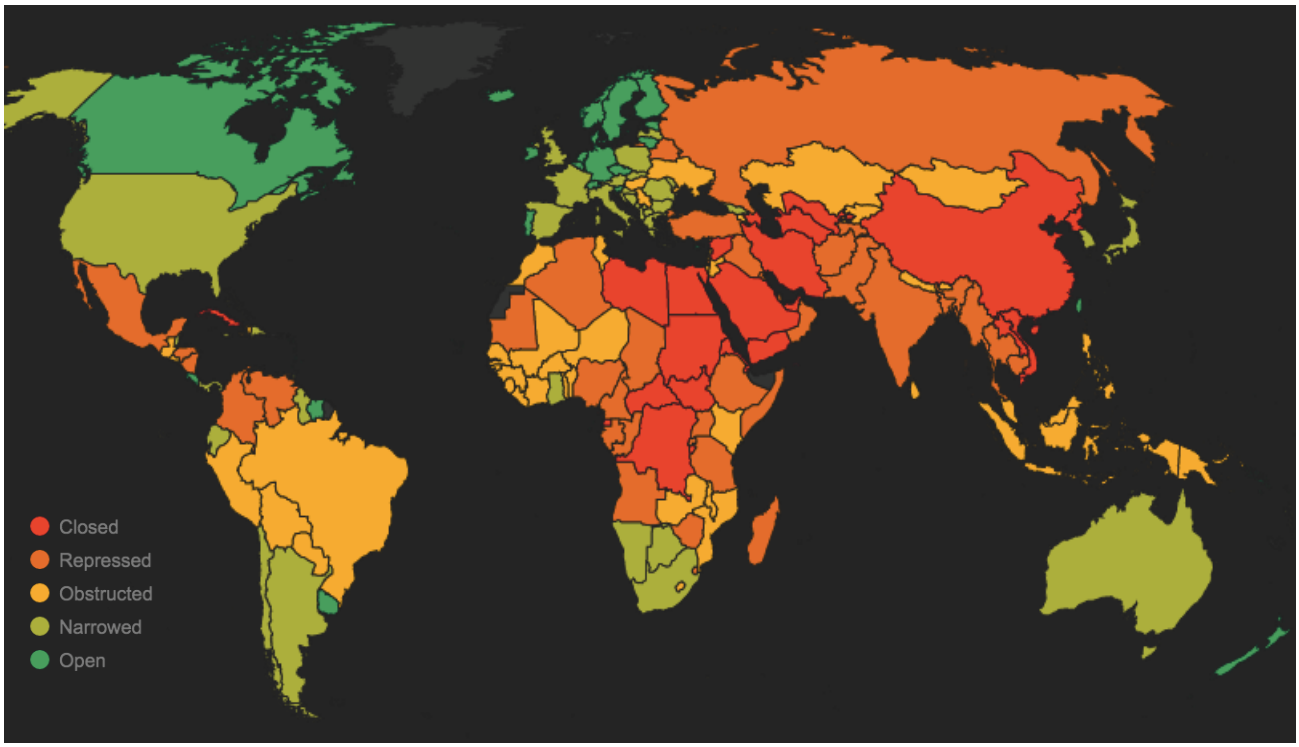
EQ1 - To what extent does the CSO-LA Thematic Programme respond to the evolving needs of the CSOs and LAs to operate in their respective roles and areas of engagement?

Summary of findings

- Overall, the CSO-LA programme was found to be relevant. It was country-specific and aimed to respond to complex and changing contexts.
- However, the ambition level of the programme was high given the challenges faced by civil society and local authorities.
- The CSO consultation process, underlying roadmaps and monitoring improved during the programme period, but varied considerably from country to country it was found challenging to reach beyond the capital city.
- Consultation with LAs at national level was generally weaker compared to CSOs, although there were some strong examples of good practice.
- Engagement with both CSO and LA platforms and apex associations served to deepen the consultation beyond a focus on project management and delivery.
- The call for proposals reflected the EU CSO-LA policy priorities, although projects tended to focus more on CSO-LA capacity and service delivery than on increasing the space for civil society and participation in democratic governance**.**
- The call for proposals and the proposals that emerged reflected the consultation and the needs of CSOs, but with a tendency to overlook CSO internal governance shortcomings and the issue of financial sustainability.
- There were relatively few calls for proposals aimed at LAs and in some countries none.
- Gender, but not climate, was increasingly mainstreamed and prioritised in the consultations, CSO roadmaps and call for proposals, particularly following the second generation of CSO roadmaps.

Overall, the CSO-LA programme (hereafter "the programme") was found to be relevant. It was country-specific and aimed to respond to complex and changing contexts. As noted in a recent stocktaking by the roadmap facility: "*Analysis …indicates that the three ambitions of the 2012 Communication on EU engagement with Civil Society, "The Roots of Democracy", remain fully relevant, if not more relevant, today*." (Roadmap Facility, 2020). This is a view widely shared by civil society and reflects concern about the shrinking space for civil society. In addition, the programme responded to the 2013 communication on local authorities, outlining the strategic priorities for the EU on strengthening LAs responsibilities in enhancing citizens' participation in decision-making, with the aim of promoting good governance and sustainable development at the local level. Figures 2.1 and 2.2 show current assessments on space for civil society and local government.

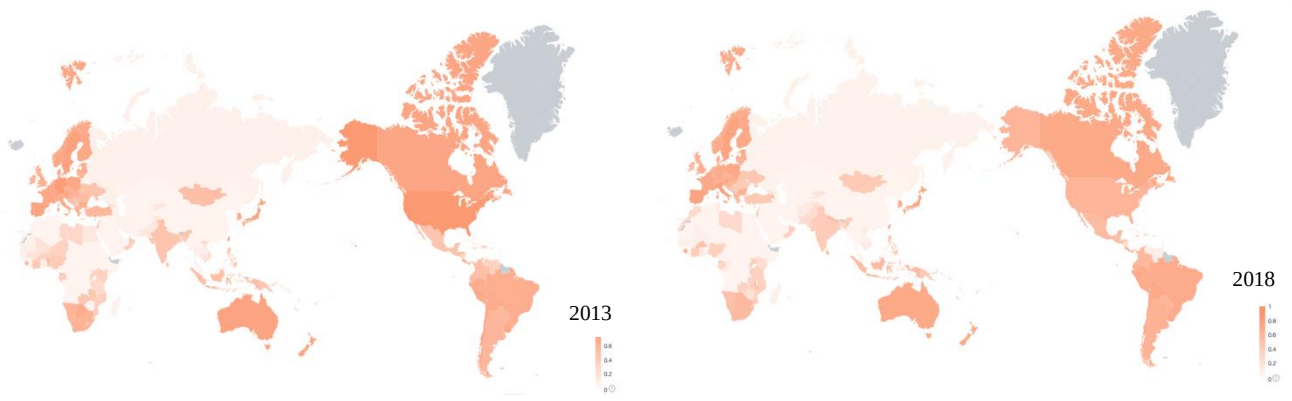
Figure 2.1 Space for civil society



Source: Civicus, https://www.civicus.org/index.php/state-of-civil-society-report-2019

Figure 2.2 shows the extent to which citizens globally can participate in free elections for local governments, and if so to what extent they can operate without interference from unelected bodies at the local level. The situation in 2018 and 2013 is shown. The lighter shading indicates low levels of local democracy as captured by the democracy index. The figure indicates that the Americas and Australia has relatively high levels of local democracy whereas most of Africa, Asia and parts of Eastern Europe and Central Asia have relatively low levels of local democracy. The figure also shows that the situation has not materially changed since 2013 and parts of Africa have deteriorated.

Figure 2.2 Status of local democracy in 2018 and 2013 respectively.



Source: The Global State of Democracy Indices https://www.idea.int/gsod-indices/#/indices/world-map

The focus of development cooperation is shifting. Increasingly, attention is being given to countries in conflict and fragile situations. At the same time, increasingly attention is being given to piloting new cooperation arrangements with emerging economies. Both these trends enhance the relevance of civil society and local authorities and the importance of this programme because both civil society and local authorities are key actors in the cooperation with the EU.

First, in fragile situations, governments are lacking the capacity and/or legitimacy to drive inclusive development. Six of the ten countries visited for this evaluation are classified as fragile on the OECD DAC "States of Fragility" list 2018, and an additional two have several characteristics of fragility: Colombia and Brazil. Whether the state is not willing or not able to fulfil its key functions, civil society has a role to play in policy making, engaging to ensure an informed and (when possible) public debate about policy options. In addition, civil society is a key force in holding the state accountable to the general population, especially when there are no checks and balances either within or outside the executive power (weak legislative and judiciary). Finally, in fragile situations, civil society has a special role to play in service delivery, which can be vital to fight extreme poverty and maintain life-saving services. Working with or under sector ministries and local authorities, where possible, can prevent further weakening of the state. Territorial approaches to development are particularly relevant where the central state is absent or rejected by the population. The evaluation team expected to find cases where there might have been a backlash from government on a programme which supported CSO with foreign funding, especially where there was a high politized situation on civil society space, but evidence of this was not found.

Second, in emerging economies, a well informed and active civil society is a strong driver of reform for a better business climate, rule of law and development that is socially inclusive, climate responsible and environmentally sustainable.

A strong point of the programme is that, although global in nature, it was generally strongly tailored to the country context. This was achieved through the development of country-based consultations and roadmaps led by the EU delegations. However, this was much stronger for civil society than for local authorities, since support to local authorities was not underpinned by mandatory roadmaps and only four recent roadmaps were made on a pilot basis (Colombia, Ecuador, Mali and Chad). Where there was strong ownership and engagement of the EU Delegations (for example in Colombia) in the programme, often through developing and following up on roadmaps, it led to quality consultations with civil society and local authorities. The country-tailored roadmaps and consultation was a key factor in enabling the programme to respond to country specific challenges and opportunities.

However, the ambition level of the programme was too high given the challenges faced by civil society and local authorities. The challenges faced by civil society and local authorities in many countries are immense; of a long-term nature; and rooted in the political economy of state and society. Where the space for civil society or local authorities was repressed or highly restrictive, the EU dialogue with government, as well as CSOs and local authorities, was not always founded on a full or fine appreciation of the political context, for example when decentralisation was stalled and required top-down, and not mainly bottom-up approaches. For LAs, this was further exacerbated by the lack of national LA roadmaps, see below. This, in turn, made it more difficult to determine a realistic ambition that the programme could aim at. The opportunities and challenges and the appropriate level of ambition was found to be highly country specific. The situation is dynamic and complex because in some countries a high state of repression in fact provided opportunities to support significant change. It was not possible based on the sample taken in this evaluation to provide any prescriptive guidance on the level of ambition or approach based on the level of repression. Instead,

it was found that the programme's approach of approaching the situation country by country through the roadmaps was likely to be the most successful strategy.

In a number of countries, such as Myanmar, civil society could not see the point of the EU's dialogue with CSOs, given the restrictions on civic space. *"The EU-CSO partnership is not clear to us [CSOs]. We know and agree on the messages and recommendations [from the consultations and in the roadmap], they came from us. But it is not clear why the EU is doing this [consultation exercise] or what they will use it for".* This was also reflected in other countries such as Indonesia where CSO interviewees considered the roadmap as an "interesting and conceptual guideline" but did not see the link or the relevance with their own activities. A gap is seen between the structured dialogue of the EU with CSOs and what the EU can do in practice with these messages in its political and policy dialogue with the government. There is, then, a further gap between delivery of policy messages through dialogue with the government and what changes in reality on the ground. In Tajikistan, CSOs tended to present project proposals that were non-political and to focus on the safer ground of service delivery, in part due to the restrictive space for civil society. As noted in the country analysis conducted by this evaluation, this does not mean that the priorities of the roadmap and call for proposals were necessarily wrong. But it *does* imply that not enough was done to determine a realistic ambition for the programme. It throws into question the design of how resource and time-intensive the EU dialogue with CSOs, LAs and government should be (and how it should be conducted), given the very limited scope for implementation.

Nevertheless, and despite difficult contexts in many countries, there has been a strong appreciation of the political support of the EU, including beyond the programme. Civil society, for example, strongly appreciated the political influence of the EU in curbing assassinations of social leaders in Colombia. By speaking out strongly and by acting in concert with others in the international community, the EU's stand and voice reduced the level of impunity. In doing so, it reportedly encouraged social leaders not to give up. In Chad, too, it was noted by civil society that "*[even if] the EU feels limited, it has a lot of influence. And it is the primary support to civil society. It keeps the light on".*

However, particularly where the context was not conducive, the programme emphasis on projects had clear limitations, especially when lacking an analysis of which issues can be progressed with which champions in government, local government and civil society. A positive example is from Chad, where a pragmatic approach was taken to work with reform-minded LAs and count on a demonstration effect to encourage others. However, generally the projects were short-term or with limited scope and only rarely able to link and engage at a broader political or governance level. It was difficult for the projects to create the entry points and have sufficient influence to contribute to an articulation between local, regional and national level partners in government, private sector and civil society. In many cases, such articulation was often necessary to create change and unlock resources. For example, in a number of countries, the programme support led to changes in policy and approach at municipal level, for example in Senegal. But policy changes were not implemented or possible to sustain without accessing finance from higher levels of government. According to the associations of LAs under the framework partnership agreement, the programme was over-focused on short-term project delivery and under-focussed on LA framework conditions and political partnership that could promote decentralisation and scaling up of new innovations. Another example is with CSO projects that were successful in improving service delivery and LA-CSO dialogue, and which were replicated in several municipalities, but failed to influence district-, province- and national-level policies – unless complemented by top-down actions, usually under the European Development Fund as happened in Chad.

The CSO consultation process, underlying roadmaps and monitoring improved during the programme period, but varied considerably from country to country; it was found challenging to reach beyond the capital city. The CSO consultation process was served by clear guidance that explained the purpose of the programme and provided templates and details on how to undertake the consultation and underlying concept notes and roadmaps. A roadmap facility was also made available on demand to support EU delegations. Since the start of the programme, according to a recent stocktaking report by the roadmap facility some 75 delegations have been supported to varying degrees by the roadmap facility with a high level of satisfaction.

Nevertheless, the quality of the CSO consultation and related monitoring, updating and adjusting the consultation and other analysis was mixed and varied considerably between countries. As noted by a study conducted by Concord (2017) and reflecting the earlier period of the programme under the first generation of CSO roadmaps: "*most dialogues and participation processes are conducted in an ad hoc way and are centred on a limited number of organisations".* But examples both in first- and second-generation roadmaps were also found of very good practice, where the consultation was continuous and systematic. Brazil, Chad, Colombia, and Madagascar are particularly good examples of extensive consultation – for some of these countries, the consultation covered both CSOs and local authorities. In these cases, the consultation and roadmaps are praised by CSOs and others as a tool that triggered engagement with civil society. A typical statement comes from a CSO in Colombia: *"the Hoja de Ruta [consultation mechanism] led to wide discussion and a good level of participation. The EUD was particularly good at prioritising the discussion and bringing the long speeches of some of the CSOs to something that is grounded and practical. But more participation is needed at the local level. I feel the local voice is missing".* This indicates a well-grounded fear that the needs and viewpoints at the local level are not being heard strongly enough.

As noted in the statement above, even in countries with a good CSO consultation process, it proved very difficult to reach beyond the capital and beyond the well-resourced and elite CSOs. An exception, which indicates the possibility that was potentially open to other countries, was Zimbabwe, where the consultation was conducted in five regions from the early days of the programme, and Chad, where the joint programming process involved consultations with CSOs and LAs in remote areas. In Myanmar, a new process of CSO consultation was started, after the failure of the first, which is designed to deliberately reach out and engage CSOs in different states/regions and is already succeeding in that aim. It should be noted that in many countries, civil society is strongly organised so that reaching out to organised civil society is more of an end point than a starting point for the programme.

Overall, the CSO consultation strategies, roadmaps and other supportive analysis improved markedly in most countries during the programme period, and especially between the first and second generation of roadmaps.

Consultation with LAs at national level was generally weaker compared to CSOs, although there were some strong examples of good practice. The earlier practice of concept notes adopted in preparation for the programme in 2013/4 was broader in that it also addressed the local authorities unlike the later roadmaps. These later roadmaps, which could have provided a diagnostic analysis for LAs, were generally only made for CSOs, whilst no requirement nor funds were allocated for the formulation of LA roadmaps. In 2018/9, four roadmaps for LAs were started, through a DEVCO headquarters initiative, in Colombia, Chad, Ecuador and Mali and some LA roadmaps were also started locally by the EU delegations in Zimbabwe and Guatemala. Some countries such as Brazil and Columbia (initially) included LAs in their roadmaps thus making roadmaps that combined CSO and LA.

Without the funds and mandatory requirements for LA roadmaps, engagements in structured LA dialogues were left to the EU delegations. However, the resources, time and skill-set available at the EU delegations made it more difficult to undertake consultation and engage meaningfully with LAs. The most promising potential entry points for engagement were the associations of LAs. This was because associations of LAs were well placed given their role in collective learning, dissemination of best LA practices, and the potential to translate such learnings into LA advocacy for framework improvements. However, engaging with associations of LAs was also problematic because in some countries, they did not exist and in many others, they were very weak and unable to engage in an intensive and structured dialogue. But even in Uganda, where there was a strong association of LAs (ULGA), the consultation did not take off in part because the launch of the programme phase coincided with a general deterioration of the Uganda-EU relationship. Zimbabwe saw a positive development in LA consultations, in part because it was not easy to work with the central government. In these circumstances the EU delegation found structured consultations with local authorities worthwhile as a means to strengthen the strategic orientation of the programme.

Engagement with both CSO and LA platforms and apex associations served to deepen the consultation beyond a focus on project management and delivery. The presence of strong and representative platforms and apex associations either of civil society or local authorities was a feature of many successful consultation processes. Engagement with platforms and associations was deliberately targeted as a priority strategy in the programmes' multi-annual indicative programme (2014-2020). Where platforms and associations were present, they offered the possibility to lift the consultation beyond the focus on the management and delivery of projects financed by the programme (see Box 2.1). The presence of robust platforms and associations also made it possible to finance the core strategic plans of the organisations – at least where the platforms or associations had a unique role that justified direct negotiation. In this way, in countries such as Colombia, where there was already a strong CSO national association, the consultation and dialogue has developed to such a stage that there is a potential to evolve from a donor engagement instrument to a wider process driven by the civil society itself. In other countries, working with the available platforms and apex associations proved difficult because of their lack of anchoring in community-based organisations and therefore, representativeness. In Madagascar, some by their professionalism and governance gained legitimacy over time, vis-à-vis both local CSOs and government, but still struggled to collect membership fees.

Box 2.1 Zimbabwe – Nationwide CSO support for capacity development and joint advocacy

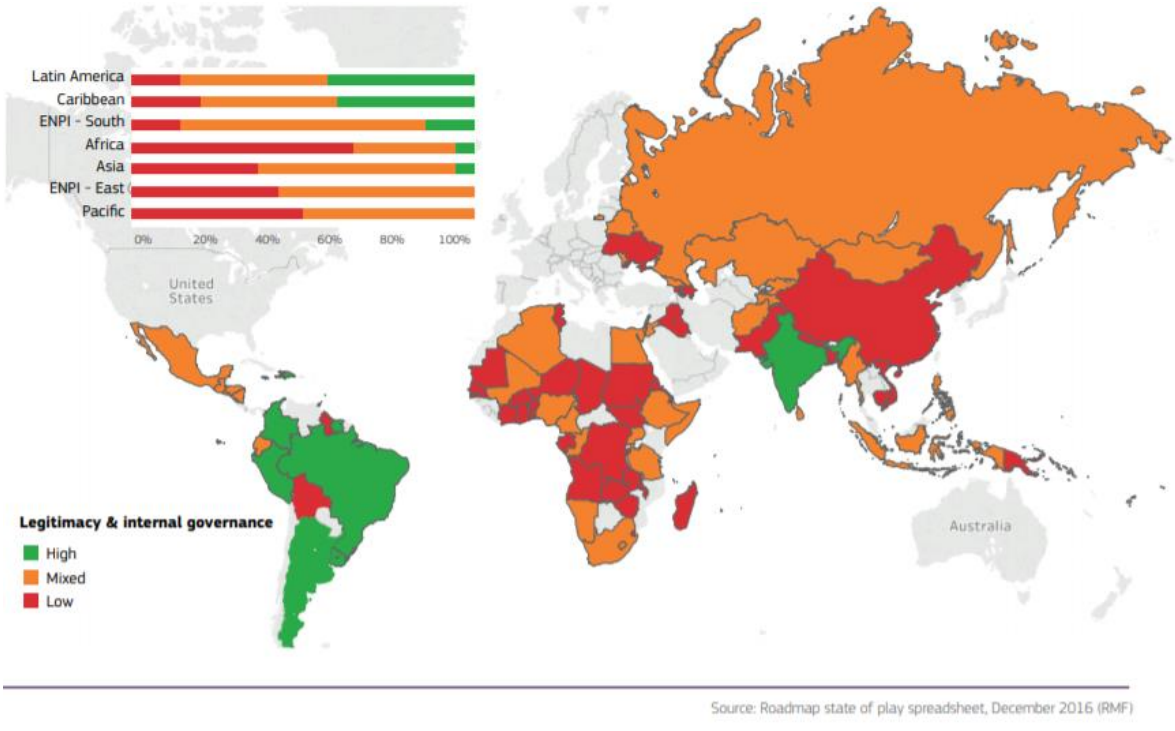
What was done and what was learnt: The Non-State Actors Coordination and Capacity Strengthening Programme 2016-2019 emerged from the process of preparing the CSO Roadmap in Zimbabwe in 2014. The programme supported the Non-State Actors Apex Alliance in Zimbabwe and was managed by one of its members, the National Association of NGOs. The programme was able to reach out to CSOs throughout Zimbabwe: it supported capacity development of CSOs and apex organizations at district and provincial level, and leveraged this support to mobilise CSO networks and 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 on broader issues such as the constitutional amendments. Another lesson was that cascading capacity support relying on apex member contributions needs to be agreed upon more explicitly at the programme design stage.

The implications: The EUD in Zimbabwe is discussing with the apex organisations how to proceed with further programme support based on results and lessons learned from the NSA programme 2016-2019.

The call for proposals reflected the EU CSO-LA policy priorities, although projects tended to focus more on CSO-LA capacity and service delivery than on increasing the space for civil society and participation in democratic governance. The programme and call for proposals reflected the policy priorities of the 2011 communication (COM (2011) 637 final "Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: and Agenda for Change"). But in practice, most CSOs tended to focus their projects on capacity and service delivery with looser, less definable links to how they would contribute to opening civil society space and improving democratic governance. The challenge was that increasing the space for civil society and democratic governance was not easy to achieve through short-term projects: most CSO-LA projects run over three years, while bilateral donors (such as Switzerland) extend support over five to ten years. In some countries, the opportunity for CSOs to contribute meaningfully was limited by the highly restrictive context for civil society, as earlier noted. Most CSOs found it necessary to gain a seat at the table with government through service delivery as a steppingstone for later contributing to the space for civil society or influencing democratic governance.

The call for proposals and the proposals that emerged reflected the consultation and the needs of CSOs, but with a tendency to overlook CSO internal and governance shortcomings and the issue of financial sustainability. A survey conducted by the roadmap facility clearly indicated that in the view of the EU delegations, the CSOs in most countries in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Asia and Africa had mixed or poor levels of legitimacy and internal governance (EU info note on country roadmaps for engagement with civil society, 2017), see figure 2.3. However, whilst the issue of weak CSO internal governance and legitimacy was recognised by the EU delegations, it was not generally a focus of the consultation and diagnostic analysis, or it was only touched on lightly. It did not appear as a feature in the call for proposals and improvement in internal governance and legitimacy was not considered as a pre-condition for financing.

Figure 2.3 EU Views on legitimacy and internal governance of CSOs.



Source: Info Note EU Country Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society, June 2017

The national and especially the smaller CSOs and also local authorities and associations of LAs often suffered from cripplingly low levels of financial sustainability. This put the sustainability and scaling up of results created at risk. Whilst the projects could alleviate this in the short term, the greater challenge was to find longer-term solutions. The call for proposals and subsequent proposals did not systematically respond to the fundamental issue of longer-term financial sustainability either for CSOs or LAs. However, some projects, particularly in the later years, started to engage more actively on the topic of financial sustainability (for example: 2016/375999 Promoting Equitable, Accountable Civic Engagement in Myanmar (PEACE, see Box 2.2).

Box 2.2 Myanmar - Enhancing financial sustainability

What was done and what was learnt – The financial sustainability of most CSOs in Myanmar is precarious, leading to piecemeal intervention and over-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 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.

There were relatively few calls for proposals aimed at LAs and in some countries none. After 2017 it was decided to centralise the call for proposals for LAs and focus on urban issues. In general, the call for proposals promoted local participation, service provision and territorial development which are the areas where they worked best. However, with a few exceptions, the call for proposals at country level was not able to build on diagnostic analyses, which could have guided the design of sustainable and scalable LA projects. Nor did the call for proposals link projects innovations closely to wider decentralisation processes such as fiscal decentralisation and transfer of responsibilities, not even where such wider decentralisation processes were financed by the EU, such as in Uganda.

The calls for proposals were tailored for coherence with EU thematic and geographical priority areas (e.g. with National Indicative Programmes) and for CSO-LA cooperation, and entailed some dialogue on such priority issues. However, weaker aspects of the call for proposals included insufficient attention to - or the absence of - design requirements to link projects with national advocacy, learning and institutionalization, unless going through associations of LAs or (in very limited cases) guided by a roadmap. The EU delegations also needed greater capacity to facilitate the learning aspect and link it to reform.

Overall, the programme modality was not ideal for addressing the highly complex needs of local authorities and funds allocated for LA budget lines were limited (basically, one call was made in each of the case countries). The call for proposals was found to be a fundamentally difficult instrument for the LAs because LAs are not used to preparing projects, and it is difficult for them to receive and account for external funds. It was easier for an association of LAs to make use of and respond to the call for proposals.

In reality the EU delegations, with limited resources, may have made the right decision in de-prioritising the support to LAs through the programme. However, by linking the programme and the call for proposals to wider decentralisation processes, the piloting of innovations through associations

of LAs could have contributed to a stronger response to the challenges faced by LAs. This is because these challenges are often related to national processes, beyond the reach of individual LA projects.

Gender, but not climate, was increasingly mainstreamed and prioritised in the consultation, CSO roadmaps and call for proposals particularly following the second generation of roadmaps. With some exceptions, gender was largely absent or superficial in the first generation of CSO roadmaps and call for proposals. But the mainstreaming and consideration of gender was substantially improved in the call for proposals and in the proposals financed following the second generation of roadmaps, after 2017. In earlier calls for proposals gender was either not mentioned or only represented by standard wording. For example, in Myanmar, there was a steady increase in the attention to gender in the three calls from 2015 where it featured but in a standardised way to 2017 where specific gender projects were called for, to 2019 where it was a requirement that all projects mainstreamed gender. Gender also featured strongly in the regional CSO consultations carried out in Myanmar. A similar increase in the attention to gender is evident in Madagascar and other countries although there is still a general weakness in that the focus is often on numbers rather than improving the quality of life of women and enhancing equity. For example, in Colombia, an observation was made by the evaluation team that many of the projects disaggregated gender in their reporting but failed to budget for or provide for childcare meaning that mothers with young children were disadvantaged when attending training or project activities. Climate change and environment was given new emphasis in the multi-annual indicative programme (2018-2020) in that it was noted as a principle of the programme and one of five priorities (climate change, gender, migration, youth, fragility) where each project needed to target at least one. However, climate, neither mitigation or adaptation, has not yet featured strongly (at least for the 15 countries studied), unlike gender, in the consultations, in the call for proposals or given the right to initiative, in the proposals submitted and financed.

2.2 Results

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?
EQ5 - To what extent and how has the CSO-LA Thematic Programme contributed to the empowerment of CSOs and LAs as development actors?
EQ6 - To what extent and how has the CSO-LA Thematic Programme helped to achieve transparency and accountability and overall improved democratic governance?
EQ7 - To what extent and how has the programme promoted local development through a territorial approach?

Summary of findings

For CSOs:

- The programme has achieved results in capacity development, policy and democratic governance.
- The programme succeeded, through some projects, in improving service delivery and local economic development, and was especially noted for reaching remote, vulnerable, and marginalised groups.
- However, in many cases the results were localised; not scaled up; and doubts remain about their sustainability.
- The influence on policy and democratic governance benefitted from a whole-of-EU approach, but also depended on a conducive environment that was not always in place.
- Whilst service provision and economic development created entry points, these were not always exploited fully.
- The internal governance and willingness of CSOs to cooperate with local government were also factors influencing results.
- Framework partnership agreements led to policy influence at the global level, but the link to the country level was weak- at least so far.
- Capacity development was strong at the project level; however, it was rarely strategic and did not often lead to systemic change.

For LAs:

- The support to LAs became more strategic compared to previous programme cycles but still struggled to address through piloting and innovation, fundamental flaws in local government frameworks found in most development contexts.
- The programme improved governance, planning, budgeting, and service delivery in targeted LAs, but interventions were mostly localised and lacked sustainability beyond the project duration.
- The programme supported territorial development outcomes and multi-actor partnership capacities in several countries, but interventions were difficult to sustain and scale up.
- There was limited evidence of testing and piloting of territorial development approaches and how the programme understood such approaches.
- In countries where EU delegations invested in structured dialogues with LAs and associations of LAs, the programme was able to position itself strategically and aim for more sector-wide LA outreach.
- EU delegation support for associations of LAs mostly targeted policy implementation and member support and did not lead to policy change, even where evidence-based advocacy was attempted.
- The framework partnership agreement-LAs supported capacity development of national associations of local authorities. However, there is limited evidence that the support was effectively linked to country level support from the EU delegations

The programme had high-level objectives involving the improvement of the enabling environment for civil society and local authorities as well as ensuring greater participation that would contribute to improved democratic governance. It also aimed at the development of the capacity of civil society

and local authorities as actors of governance and development. Moreover, it sought to improve service delivery and local economic development through engaging with CSOs and LAs and championing multi-stakeholder approaches. In this evaluation, the results expected from the programme were looked at through the lens of capacity development of LAs and CSOs across a number of capacity dimensions (EQ5); and more at the impact level: influence on policy change (EQ4); influence on democratic governance (EQ6); and results in terms of advancing the territorial approach to development that would lead to improved service delivery and local economic development (EQ7). The findings here are firstly related to CSOs and then later to LAs.

Programme results from a CSO perspective

The programme achieved results in capacity development, policy, and democratic governance. The programme did not have a results framework that allowed results to be identified and aggregated at country and programme level. Policy results are always difficult to attribute to any one project or programme, as there are often many stakeholders working towards the same aim. Nevertheless, based on available reporting, the survey results, and especially the field visits, there is evidence of results having been achieved.

There is evidence of projects that built up new and substantial capacity among CSOs to influence policy and democratic governance. As noted in a number of CSO roadmaps such as Indonesia's, the quality and influence of local CSOs' advocacy was weak[3]. By engaging with international CSOs, these skills were strengthened. The partnerships made between local CSOs and international CSOs provide the opportunity to the Indonesian stakeholders to fulfil and to understand better the EU technical and administrative requirements into the project cycle management. The 10% of co-financing provided by international CSOs supported local civil society as they would have not otherwise have had the resources to participate. Those partnerships did not reduce either the problematic fragmentation between well-established CSOs acting as advocacy and consultancy companies mainly located in Jakarta and the small ones based in provinces who lack professionalisation (evidence-based advocacy capabilities) and do not have access to policymaking processes. In Myanmar, a single project built up the advocacy capacity in more than 20 small, local CSOs through a local apex. Before this project, protest was the main means of advocacy. The project introduced tools that improved advocacy influence and success. These included ensuring solid evidence for policy positions; finding the right entry points and timing; adopting appropriate terminology; and ensuring that no harm was inadvertently done to the communities involved. These new approaches are reported as being appreciated by all concerned.

At the national level, there is evidence of policy results obtained through special studies financed through the programme. An example is in Colombia where the programme financed legal and other studies that helped to ensure the passage of important legislation related to civil society reform of public procurement (2015) and a law on guarantee for civil society participation (2017). There were also instances of important contributions made to improving the transparency and accountability of government at national and local levels. The programme contributed to safeguarding human rights in many countries including Myanmar, where projects led to lessening a culture of impunity for human trafficking; and Senegal, where a special focus was put on child rights; and Niger, where CSOs focussed on the rights of the disabled. Gender was also a feature of most roadmaps and EU-CSO

[3] EU Country Road Map 2014-2017 "Most CSOs are faced with the problem of having limited financial, human, technical and infrastructural resources", CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report 2006 by YAPPIKA (Civil Society Alliance for Democracy).

dialogue and to a varying degree it was also considered within projects. In Myanmar, support to a gender apex body led to developing a state parliament motion on gender-based violence, and contributions to the bill on prevention of violence against women. These and other similar cases in other countries could potentially lead to far-reaching effects.

The programme succeeded through some projects to improve service delivery and local economic development. It was especially noted for reaching remote, vulnerable and marginalised groups. Most of the projects sampled involved improving service delivery and/or local economic development, and in most cases the projects targeted the very poor in remote areas. In such areas, working directly both with individuals and through small associations, the projects were able to change the quality of life and prospects of individuals. In Tajikistan, projects worked with village elders at the very grassroots level to ensure citizens' views are included in decision-making; projects also involved working at village level with persons with disabilities, and on environmental safety and health with a direct impact on living conditions. In Senegal, projects worked with vulnerable children in areas outside of the capital, and with citizens' committees in numerous remote areas on the resolution of local development issues. In many cases, due to a variety of reasons such as conflict and historical marginalisation, the state had little presence, and the projects filled both a humanitarian and a development gap. For example, in Madagascar, where rural poverty is even more acute than urban poverty, CSO projects targeted young men and women in remote areas (e.g. extreme North).

However, in many cases the results were localised, not scaled up and doubts remain about their sustainability. Most projects were small compared to the challenges they sought to address, and they did not always aim for a snowball effect on other regions; on local policy; or on policy at a higher level (district, regional, national). Localised results and a lack of scaling affected all interventions including service delivery, democratic governance and policy interventions across most of the countries studied. On-granting (third-party financing) succeeded in involving many small CSOs. But on-granting came at the cost of even smaller projects of very short duration. The short duration was caused by the need for an additional round of calling for proposals which led to a very short time for implementation. Generally, the projects lacked critical mass because they were not linked to each other or wider processes. Even where the call for proposals asked for similar focus over the course of several calls, the generation of cumulative results was rare. Where new approaches were piloted, replication was not often considered in the project design.

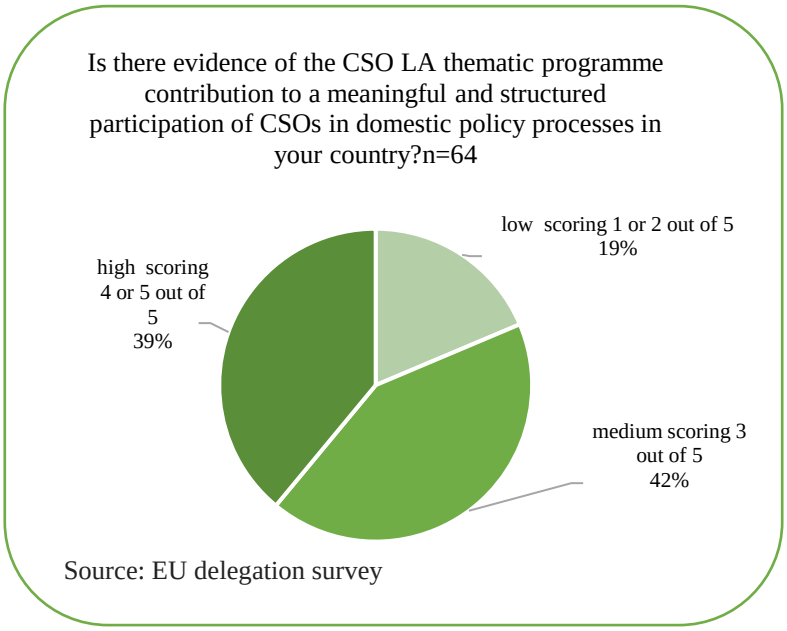
For most of the projects visited, it was not easy to see how the benefits could be sustained once the projects ended – especially for service delivery-related interventions; this situation was acknowledged by implementers. There was a general reliance on other EU funding or other donors to finance a possible next phase. Evaluations of completed projects confirm this concern. Local economic development measures, such as improving youth employment, required much more significant resources; links to wider processes; and longer durations to yield sustainable results than what were available. Provision of services in remote areas was commendable, but not sufficiently linked to local government development and service delivery to ensure that they would be continued beyond a project's lifetime. In some cases, the CSOs acted independently of local authorities and in others the linkage was attempted but did not result in close coordination.

The influence on policy and democratic governance depended on a conducive environment that was not always in place. The readiness of central and local governments to accept CSOs as development actors in their own right and as actors of governance varied considerably. In general, as recorded by CIVICUS and others, the space for civil society tended to close over the period since

2014, making the environment less conducive. In countries such as Tajikistan, this led to civil society self-censoring and not attempting to influence policy or become actors of governance. The ambition level of what could be achieved also varied. In many countries, CSOs had to first focus on implementation of existing policies (for example in Colombia) rather than attempting to bring about ambitious new policy changes. This was pragmatic and much needed as implementation usually fell short of the official policy. In some cases, local government was willing to adopt new approaches, but implementation was met with mixed success as the municipalities often did not have the capacity or budget to sustain the change.

A survey of EU delegations found that close to 40% of the respondents considered the contribution of the programme to meaningful and structured participation of CSOs in domestic policy processes satisfactory or better (high). A similar proportion found the influence to be medium and 20% found it to be less than satisfactory (low), see figure 2.4. The case of Brazil offers a good example of where the EU delegation working at a programme and political level was able to catalyse processes that ended up with the establishment of a regulatory framework. This regulation offered certainty and improved the enabling environment for civil society; in the words of CSOs in Brazil the success demonstrates "*that it is possible to reverse restrictive trends in challenging political environments*".

Figure 2.4 Contribution to a meaningful and structured participation of CSOs in domestic policy processes.



Whilst service provision and economic development created entry points, these were not always exploited fully. Engaging in service delivery and/or local economic development has proven to be a key entry point for implementers to leverage buy-in and participation of local governments: because projects "offered" services that the state was expected to deliver but is unable to because of a lack of resources and capacities, local authorities were willing to cooperate. This was the case for example in Tajikistan, where the operating environment for non-state actors is very limited, but where they are accepted in those cases where they are able to clearly cover service delivery gaps at local levels. The projects often worked at a high level of ambition with scarce resources. Their first focus was on ensuring that key physical indicators were achieved, rather than creating systemic change. In some cases, the CSOs worked in a situation where there was little trust between government and organised civil society due to a history of extreme centralisation of power, conflict, and protest. But service delivery entry points were fundamental for civil societies to affirm their position vis-à-vis local governments, and there have been various examples where CSOs are now participants in multi-stakeholder discussions with the authorities. For example, in select locations in Tajikistan, despite the difficult environment, CSOs are now facilitating participatory decision-making processes at the interface of citizens and the lowest level of local government (Mahalla committees). But in general,

the entry points were not fully exploited, and it was often difficult for CSOs to shift from service delivery, sometimes of a humanitarian nature, to the even more difficult role of holding local government to account and bringing about enhanced transparency and accountability. Even where change and influence were evident (for example in a project in Senegal that worked on local government accountability and transparency), there was a risk that the new forms of participation and influence would not be sustained in the absence of the continued resources that CSOs brought in through projects.

The difficulty in shifting from humanitarian action was both at design and implementation level. It can be partly explained by: the presence of ongoing humanitarian needs (which could not be ignored); the nature of the CSO implementing agency itself (it was what they were used to) and; the fact that humanitarian work was more clearly legitimate and within the mandate set aside for CSOs than longer-term normalised service delivery. This was the case for example in Chad, Tajikistan, and Senegal, but also other countries visited.

The internal governance and willingness and ability of CSOs to cooperate with local government were also factors influencing results. The credibility of CSOs was linked to the degree to which they were perceived as representative and genuinely speaking for their constituency. There were instances where those in local government voiced their doubt about the degree to which the CSOs represented those they said they did, for example in Myanmar and in Zimbabwe. In such cases, they were not treated seriously or were controlled through constrained and changing work permissions.

In some countries, a relatively weak local government was obliged to coordinate with more than a hundred registered CSOs in the absence of apex bodies or other means of coordination. Local governments in some countries expressed the view that it was rare that CSO projects were coordinated with each other or aligned to local municipal development plans (although there were exceptions, such as in Tajikistan, where there was clear coordination between the four projects funded under the CfP, and where the EUD specifically requested implementers to coordinate). It was difficult for the CSOs to change or adjust their plans as they were the subject of a contract. These factors tended to weaken the influence and impact of the CSO efforts both in terms of contributing to democratic governance, and in terms of bringing about sustainable service delivery and economic development benefits. A common frustration by local government can be summed up in the following statement from a senior local government official:

"The CSOs are not coordinated, when invited to a forum they just listen but do not contribute. When we try to get a common plan together they just say "we have to follow our mandate, we have our MoU. …", we don't want to intervene in the mandate, we just want to know what their plans are and see the reports so we can work together. When we are kept informed, it is ad hoc and event-based and linked to getting our permission for events. Local government and CSOs don't understand each other's priorities or know what the other one is doing. We would like to work together, but we cannot continue like this. We are operating in 3 [different] worlds: Government – NGOs – People".

Framework partnership agreements led to policy influence at the global level, but the link to the country level has been weak – at least so far. At regional and global levels, the framework partnership agreements and direct contracts clearly funded actions that aimed at strengthening CSOs' participation and recognition in global and regional policy processes and platforms (often around the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development), but the results were uneven. A number of relevant

contributions have been made, for example in the case of trade unions from Chad and Senegal, which have, as a result of a regional framework partnership agreement, engaged in national dialogue around the sustainable development goals. A specific evaluation examining the results of framework partnership agreements is underway, however based on surveys of the EU delegations it appears that the framework partnership agreements, as well as the Policy Forum for Development, are not actually well known to the EU delegations and even where they were known they appear to have had limited influence at the country level. From the perspective of NGO umbrella organisations participating in the Policy Forum for Development, while they appreciated the opportunity for consultation and dialogue with EU institutions, they also perceived the fora at regional and global levels to be one-off events and where they were unsure as to the extent to which the institutions then incorporated their input into further policy processes.

Capacity development was strong at the project level, however, it was rarely strategic and therefore, did not often lead to systemic change. Capacity development responded to project-level needs, rather than addressing strategic concerns for civil society. The first- and second-generation roadmaps were increasingly insightful in developing an analysis of the CSO landscape. However, although they increasingly translated into prioritised results frameworks, these insights were seldom translated (at CSO-LA programme level) into capacity development strategies and actions, such as options for action under different possible scenarios; issues to prioritise in capacity development; and which entry points are identified. The competitive project modality did not make it easy to build up capacity across CSOs and civil society as a whole. An attempt was made in Colombia to develop a results-based capacity development approach, based on an in-depth analysis and diagnosis of challenges and opportunities facing Colombian civil society (Box 2.3). Similar efforts at systematically addressing capacity development beyond the immediate needs of a project have also been made in other countries, such as South Africa. Learning and exchange of experience between different countries has not systematically taken place.

Box 2.3 Colombia – Monitoring the capacity development of CSOs supported by the programme

One of the main objectives of the CSO-LA programme in Colombia 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 much fewer indicators which was found to be empowering and highly useful especially when the monitoring was built into the coaching and capacity development itself. The EUD in Colombia working with the Confederation of Colombian Civil society are looking to develop a similarly simple version that will act as a tool of capacity development as well as measuring performance.

A key failing might have been not to find more ways or opportunities to strengthen and to support the strategic and internal capacity development plans of the CSOs themselves, instead of relying on new projects to build capacity along the way.

Programme results from an LA perspective[4]

The support to LAs became more strategic compared to previous programme cycles but still struggled to address through piloting and innovation, fundamental flaws in local government

[4] Sample base shown in Annex 2.

frameworks found in most development contexts. The programme positioning on LA support was challenging for the EU delegations. On the one hand, the programme targets '*LAs' Institutional Capacity* and *LA's legal, regulatory and operational frameworks (Enabling Environment) in Partner countries'.* On the other hand, it *'shall not aim at supporting public sector reforms and decentralisation programmes',* other than '*facilitate knowledge-generation, development and exchanges of good practices'.*[5] This positioning assumed that CSO-LA support was coherent with more comprehensive reform programmes, when it rarely was. Most call for proposals for LAs, whilst based on solid thematic needs assessments, could not be underpinned by LA strategies or LA roadmaps for the reasons stated above. Such strategies or roadmaps could have linked project innovation and piloting to broader framework reform initiatives such as capacity building across election term and provision of recurrent in-service training. Key for the local projects was to have a clear analysis on the capacity problems they try to address, and to distinguish between inherent capacity problems that could be solved locally and more externally imposed problems that had to be addressed at national level. There are indeed inherent capacity problems in individual LAs, such as personnel gaps, quality, training, rent seeking, remoteness, communication, especially in poor, hard to reach areas. However, in most development contexts, capacity gaps are often externally imposed on LAs due to fundamental flaws in LA frameworks and in intergovernmental relations, including challenges pertaining to ambiguous functional and fiscal assignments between levels of governments; unfunded mandates; service gaps; perverse incentives; unclear procedures; poor guidance; and even competition between government levels on decision-making in LA territories. In such contexts, and without a strategic approach, it was difficult to design interventions, and link innovation and local piloting to a national platform (ALAs, government, a decentralisation or regional development programme etc., see Box 4 below). This also had an implication on support to CSO services: they can add value where they are complementary to LA services, or contribute to making LA services more effective, more transparent and equitable. However, without a clear strategy, they can also harm LA service delivery or encroach on the local governance space, if delivered without CSO-LA coordination.

Box 2.4 Capturing lessons from territorial development support in Northern Uganda
Unlike large-scale support programmes, CSO-LA projects often struggle to link innovation to wider processes. EU support to territorial development in Northern Uganda include 1) CSO-LA support to LA service delivery, green growth and community development and 2) LA support rendered from the joint Development Initiative for Northern Uganda (DINU) Programme. Both the CSO-LA and the DINU programme entail important lessons on LA capacity gaps relevant for the national level. For the CSO-LA support, this includes lessons from the piloting of district customary land management (2018/CTR393073) and on green growth linked to Shea Nut value chain development (2018/CTR393895). However, in these projects, important lessons and innovations are not well linked to national authorities by project design other than at operational level, and the Uganda Local Government Association is not involved in them. In contrast, the DINU Programme is governed by a board with representatives from national authorities and the ALAs. Based on the knowledge obtained from the board work, the Uganda Local Government Association developed a national advocacy initiative on road maintenance, as the learning from the programme indicated that district operational and maintenance costs associated with the road investments was an unfunded mandate. The DINU programme illustrates the comparative advantage of having a country-level management board that can link wider lessons learnt with policy initiatives, whereas individual CSO-LA projects struggle more with this and have to assure such linkages case-by-case, unless channeled through ALAs or designed as part of a wider initiative (see Box 2.5).

[5] The Multi-annual indicative programme for the CSO-LA Thematic programme 2014—2020 p 13 and 20.

The programme improved governance, planning, budgeting and service delivery in targeted LAs, but interventions were mostly localised and lacked sustainability beyond the project duration. Where LA capacity was supported, some improvements were achieved in public financial management, local planning, and in the overall appreciation of the LA role and mandate. In Zimbabwe, LA support contributed to an increased understanding of the new constitutional role of LAs and their development mandate, which enhanced LAs engagement with ratepayers and enabled them to increase rate collections and improve services. In Colombia, where articulation between CSOs and municipal, but also departmental and national relevant authorities and actors was promoted, it led to more effective planning, implementation and communication actions, and a more comprehensive and territorial approach. In Brazil, LA support turned out to be relevant for municipalities to comply with administrative and reporting requirements to access federal funding. The programme also produced tangible outcomes in social services in countries such as Uganda and Chad, see below. In South Africa, SALGA promoted service standards in selected LAs for upscale of better LA service standards overall and to improve the accountability of LA service delivery (2016/CTR374420), while tailored service delivery was promoted by support to citizens service centres in Ukraine (2014/CTR371134), to enhance transparency, accountability in administrative service provision, promote quick feedback on service quality and ultimately mitigate corrupted practises. However, even in such favourable cases, results often remained timebound and localised to the targeted LAs, and without roadmaps lacked convincing pathways to sustain and upscale them. One EU delegation survey respondent summarised what was experienced in many countries: "*I think the component of LA is not very efficient because the funds are small and not systematically used. Therefore, many of the interventions will be stand-alone one-time thing with no real impact or sustainability. It's better to have it in the bilateral programmes under decentralization".*

The programme supported territorial development outcomes and multi-actor partnership capacities in several countries, but interventions were difficult to sustain and upscale. There is evidence of improved multi-actor partnerships, which promoted synergies and coordination among actors, including LAs, service providers (e.g. vocational training centres), CSOs, trade associations and academia. Where such interventions worked well, some increase in the capacity of LAs and CSOs and local service providers to engage and create synergies that facilitated local development occurred. For example, through an increase in sustainable agricultural production and small-scale job opportunities through the support for formal and informal vocational training institutes; CSOs; agricultural associations; and more equitable land management. In Colombia for example, coordination mechanisms with CSOs (known as "mesa") where re-energised by one of the projects (2017/CTR394060) and led to the municipality of Buenaventura to provide improved mental health services especially for women traumatised by the past and ongoing conflict. In Uganda, the 'Skills, Employment and Entrepreneurship for Acholi" (2016/CTR371649) project was able to translate vocational training for disadvantaged groups into sustained job opportunities and livelihoods (workshops and subsistence agriculture) in hard-to-reach, post-conflict areas with very limited opportunities, while a number of ongoing LA projects also support inclusive economic/green growth through community development, but from different angles such as sustainable land use, shea nut value chain development and improved livelihoods and mobilisation of farmers and local trade/business development (2018/CTR393073, 2018/CTR393895, 2018/CTR394171, 2016/CTR371337). In Mauritius, CSOs worked with the support of village councils in certain localities where there was a high concentration of vulnerable families. CSOs were allowed to use LA facilities (e.g. village halls) to offer their services to the poor segment of the society. In many countries, however, projects had limited scope and outreach and limited linkage to national learning

on longer-term sustainability issues. This made them less effective and vulnerable and dependent on continuous EU or other donor support.

There was limited evidence of testing and piloting of territorial approaches to local development and how the programme understood such approaches. The programme gave priority to test pilot actions promoting local development through a territorial approach (TALD). Whilst the call for proposals drew on selected local development approaches from the 2016 TALD guidelines, they did not refer to 'testing of pilot actions' for the benefit of a broader territorial approach, and when facing complex institutional issues, they did not have the resources and tools to address them. In some cases, implementation through associations of LAs broadened the scope and networking among LAs, and allowed the associations of LAs to document and disseminate lessons learned from such projects. The GLOserve project in Northern Uganda stands out positively as a programme outlier, as its design captures the issues of sustainability and scalability (see Box 2.5).

Box 2.5 The GLOserve project in Northern Uganda (2018/CTR394171)

Whilst the support is equivalent to other projects in terms of scope and funding, it demonstrates the potential of the CSO programme and how CSO-LA projects can test local innovations on behalf of a national programme and a national government partner. As a partnership cooperation between the German Adult Education Centre (DVV), three Districts, and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, the project is designed as a test bed for the national Integrated Community Learning for Creation of Wealth Programme (ICOLEW). On behalf of ICOLEW, it pilots support to literacy/numeracy, skills, business development and community development and improved LA service effectiveness and outreach. Based on the results, the Ministry of Gender will negotiate with the Ministry of Finance a fully resourced nationwide rollout of the programme. Notably, the project emerged from a Call for Proposals (CfP), which did not contain well-defined criteria promoting scalable approaches.
(This project is presented in a case study in this evaluation report – Volume 2)

In countries where EU delegations invested in structured dialogues with LAs and associations of LAs, the programme was able to position itself strategically and aim for more sector-wide LA outreach. Only four countries established LA Roadmaps to underpin the relevance of LA support. In Colombia, the LA Roadmap (*Hoja de ruta*), involved both CSOs and LAs, including 1) National authorities in charge of the government decentralisation policy 2018-2022, 2) Associations of municipalities, departments and capitals, 3) Local authorities and 4) Member States and other development partners. The exercise identified focal areas of decentralisation, the demands of LAs and associations of LAs, and how each development partner could engage. This made the EU delegation better equipped to ensure programme coherence in support to territorial development and public finance. In Zimbabwe, budget cuts in the EU geographical instruments triggered a new, more strategic approach for the CSO-LA programme. Based on a structured LA dialogue, a new LA strategy was adopted in 2017, leading to two associations of LA- implemented capacity development projects for LAs with government buy in. This included linkage to an ongoing EU-WB-GIZ programme for LA service benchmarking, managed by the urban association of LA and extending this benchmarking to rural development councils and the rural association of LA. As the country visit found, this approach also positioned the EU delegation strongly in future LA capacity support as the more strategic approach emerged when other donors left Zimbabwe.

EUD support for LAs and associations of LAs mostly targeted policy implementation and member support, and did not lead to policy change, even where evidence-based advocacy was attempted. Building association of LA capacity and recognition by government as a credible

advocacy partner is a long-term endeavour. CSO-LA support for associations of LAs did not lead to policy change, and associations of LAs in most countries found it difficult to gain recognition as dialogue partners by national governments. Moreover, CSO-LA support for LAs and associations of LAs mostly focused on policy implementation and member services and projects covered by the evaluation included capacity support to alliances, interventions and platforms related to policy implementation, not necessarily advocacy for policy change. However, CSO-LA support also presented opportunities for association of LAs to apply local learning to national advocacy and potential policy change. Where advocacy was attempted, this mostly remained 'work in progress', i.e. support to policy dialogue processes, workshops, submission of position papers without government feedback etc. For example, based on CSO-LA support (2016/CTR366504, 2018/CTR393587, 2019/CTR390097), the Zimbabwean ALAs submitted policy position papers on the future functions of the new provincial councils, on the design of the upcoming intergovernmental fiscal transfer system and on functional delamination pertaining land management in rural councils. Whilst becoming better at this, i.e. compiling consensus mandates from their members and presenting them at the Presidential Forum and other high-level forums, there has been little feedback on these inputs, let alone evidence of concrete policy change. Overall, however, if advocacy is persistent, evidence-based and timely, it may eventually succeed, even after the conclusion of a project.

The framework partnership agreement-LAs supported capacity development of national associations of local authorities. However, there is limited evidence that the support was effectively linked to country level support from the EU delegations. According to the FPA Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism**,** the FPAs at country level saw most progress when the Advocacy Groups launched by the International Association of Francophone Mayors contributed to a gradual improvement of the legal context in pilot countries, with the adoption of laws, decrees, and/or policies on local public finance and on statutes of the elected and civil service in Burkina Faso, Cameroun and Côte d'Ivoire. Some progress on basic services was also achieved in Cameroun and Côte d'Ivoire. However, according to the FPA Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism, there was in general limited evidence on the effectiveness of framework partnership agreement support to new and established national associations of LAs; to national learning; and to collective action, especially as decentralisation processes remain contested in many countries. This suggests, that regional support to national associations of local authorities may complement country level support, but not substitute it. Interviews with EU delegations also revealed that communication on FPA and EUDEL support to LAs and ALAs at country level was too limited and there was potential for improved coherence through more regular and timely dialogue between the FPAs and the delegations.

2.3 Cooperation approach

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

Summary of findings

- The programme was designed and positioned to enable added value in a variety of ways compared to other instruments and programmes.
- The programme attempted, through a mix of approaches and modalities, to create transformative effects beyond the individual projects – but with mixed success.
- Multi-stakeholder partnerships
  - The aim of promoting multi-stakeholders partnership was affected by inadequate attention to the political economy context.
  - The approach of directly involving the local authorities proved more difficult than expected.
- Country tailoring - the tailoring of the approach to the country context through roadmaps and other initiatives was a positive feature, even if it was highly variable in how well it worked.
- Complementarity - complementarity within the EU and with member states was explicitly aimed at, although not always easy to achieve in practice, especially with member states.
- Country, regional and global interaction - the global and regional initiatives were not effective in reaching out to the country level.
- Mix of modalities
  - The project approach, choice of mechanisms, and procedures were not ideal for reaching the ambitious and complex aims of the programme.
  - The call for proposals were well managed, but even with innovation and good management they could not overcome the limits of the project approach.
  - Most, but not all, CSOs found the EU procedures to be overly complex compared to other donors, and a barrier for achieving results.
  - The programme had to balance a series of trade-offs which influenced what could be achieved in practice
- Monitoring and learning - programme-level learning took place, however, monitoring was weak. Project-level monitoring was robust but tended to focus on accountability and not performance or impact.

These findings on cooperation approach are supplemented by a table showing strengths and weaknesses of different funding delivery mechanisms (Volume I annex 5).

The programme was designed and positioned to enable added value in a variety of ways compared to other instruments and programmes. For civil society, the main value added of the programme was that it mobilised resources in areas that were not covered through other instruments and programmes. For local authorities, the main area of value added was the dedicated direct support for LA innovations and effort to help CSOs and LAs work together. In total, six areas of value added were identified:

- It could be used to work on sensitive issues without using labels such as democracy, human rights (European instrument for democracy and human rights) or stabilisation (instrument contributing to stability and peace), which is useful when such labels risk antagonising the government or unduly attracting political attention.
- It could be mobilised in the absence of a bilateral cooperation framework and was then particularly useful, or when the bilateral cooperation does not include sectors that are nonetheless important, for example when social sectors are not included in the national indicative

programmes' sectors of concentration. CSO-LA projects are useful to meet priority needs but are also helpful to keep an ear to the ground in some regions or on some specific themes (e.g. health in Madagascar; environmental problems affecting the rural poor in Tajikistan).

- It could be used with or without partner government approval; relatedly, it could be used to target beneficiaries that cannot be reached by national indicative programmes, such as the poorest communities (e.g. Antananarivo slums); hard-to-reach communities (e.g. Chad); vulnerable children (regions of Senegal). For LAs, it could also be used for sector-wide support through the ALAs when there was no decentralisation process ongoing. In such cases, LA support could focus on innovations and dissemination of best practises within the existing LA framework, for example through the cooperation between CLGF, VNG and the national ALAs in Zimbabwe, see below.
- The duration of its support was longer than for example that of the instrument contributing to stability and peace, and the amount was typically larger than most Member States' support to civil society.
- While the programme has not provided new or better avenues for dialogue with the EU, it has, in many cases, helped empower CSOs, and in some cases improve government-CSO dialogue at central and local level.
- For LAs, the main area of value added was the dedicated direct support for LA innovations and effort to help CSOs and LAs work together, although for many stakeholders (delegations, LAs. CSOs, development partners), LA support was better provided by more comprehensive geographic programming, as it is part of a coherent, structured and systemic whole managed by EU delegations. CSO-LA support can add value through innovation and piloting with a proper design, but the scale of the support and the way it was implemented, meant that innovation and piloting linked to wider processes was difficult to realise in practice.

The programme attempted, through a mix of approaches and modalities, to create transformative effects beyond the individual projects – but with mixed success. Key elements of the programme that were designed to enhance synergy, add value and lead to transformation included:

- Multi-stakeholder partnerships - promotion of multi-stakeholder partnerships and adoption of a joint programme for both CSOs and LAs.
- Country tailoring - the tailoring of the programme at the country level based on roadmaps and other initiatives.
- Complementarity - explicit complementarity with EU, member state and other programmes.
- Country, regional and global interaction - interaction between country-based actions and initiatives launched at the global and regional level.
- Mix of modalities – use of a mix of modalities, financing instruments and procedures to enhance and tailor outreach, achievement and sustainability of results to respond to different contexts and situations.
- Monitoring and learning - adoption of monitoring and learning tools to enhance accountability and enable adjustment in approach.

As outlined earlier, many projects created results at the micro level and reached out to some of the poorest and most marginalised people. However, it was also observed that the results were not always sustainable or transformative – a point recognised by most of the CSOs and stakeholders involved. There were only a few examples of replication of approaches that had been piloted, and limited evidence of systemic change. Transformative effects were most likely to be achieved when the projects were linked to wider processes or catalytic in nature (see Box 6).

Box 2.6 Catalytic projects

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 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.

There are many factors that influenced the success of the programme and its aim to create results beyond the project level. The key factors, as listed above, varied in their influence as outlined below:

Multi-stakeholder partnerships

The aim of promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships was affected by inadequate attention to the political economy context. There are numerous examples where projects enhanced a multi-stakeholder partnership between civil society, local and central government and in some cases also the private sector. Ecuador, where dialogue on civil society is reported as being co-led and co-owned by national civil society, is a case where dialogue has reached a maturity where it would be constructive for it to evolve from a donor instrument to a process driven by the civil society itself. But where the political economy context for engagement between civil society and government was particularly unfavourable, the projects were often limited to service provision and economic development. In some cases, such as Tajikistan, no explicit attempt was made to influence democratic governance except at the very lowest level. In some countries, a comprehensive and nuanced mapping of civil society and other diagnostic analysis took place (e.g. Madagascar and Mozambique) but the practice does not seem to have been widespread. In general, a political economy diagnosis like the one in Mozambique, that could reveal differing opportunities and approaches in countries with repressed or open space, and identify opportunities for change, was not undertaken. The level to which a deep understanding was gained through the CSO roadmap process varied, but in general, it was not translated into operational implications, in part because the roadmaps served a wider participatory and consultative purpose. The resources in delegations were constrained and limited the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The approach of directly involving the local authorities proved more difficult than expected. The approach of engaging with LAs in direct contracts to enhance their capacity and promote multi-stakeholder partnerships was flawed and rarely guided by a strategic approach and coherence with more comprehensive LA support programmes. During the programme it was recognised that the programme resources, time scale, available modalities and especially the call for proposals were far from ideal in engaging directly with LAs. For example, the programme could not do much to make up for insufficient deconcentration or a stalled decentralisation process. Eventually, the country-level contracting of projects directly with LAs was stopped. However, even the other approaches of working through LAs, associations of LAs and CSOs were often not strongly enough rooted in an understanding of the institutional and political realities of local governance to have a wider effect.

Country tailoring - the tailoring of the approach to the country context through roadmaps and other initiatives was a positive feature, even if it was highly variable in how well it worked. The CSO, and, in the four cases where they exist, the LA roadmaps and the LA Strategy in Zimbabwe were useful in tailoring the programme to the country context. In Zimbabwe, the tailoring outlined four options for LA capacity support rendered through the two national ALAs in cooperation with

CLGF and VNG (see Box 7 below), while in Colombia, support could be rendered through the federation of local government associations with the financing of projects within their strategic plan. The strong promotion of the CSO roadmaps ensured that they were, to a large extent, done, but this sometimes led to low quality and ownership- at least in some countries. Despite the roadmaps and other country-based initiatives, there were no cases where the synergy and combined effect of the individual CSO-LA projects were brought together as a coherent and cumulative programme. Nor was this easy, given CSOs' right to initiative, which underlies the call for proposals process. The prioritisation and sequencing of calls for proposals, in combination with other initiatives, helped in enhancing relevance and effectiveness in some countries such as Colombia.

Box 2.7 Tailoring of sector wide LA support in Zimbabwe

The support to LAs through the CSO-LA Thematic Programme in Zimbabwe is guided by a LA strategy developed by the EU delegation in late 2016 in close dialogue with LAs, the national ALAs and FPA-LA members CLGF and VNG. It included a scoping study of the local government sector, a mapping of the donor cooperation, a review of the present and past CSO-LA support. The scoping study recommended the EUD to take the lead in donor coordination on decentralisation and local governance, whilst the strategy outlined four options for LA support rendered through the associations of local authorities: The Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe (UCAZ), the Association of Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe (ARDCZ), and the umbrella association Zimbabwe Local Government Association (ZILGA):

- Option 1. Urban Council Benchmarking and Peer Learning driven by UCAZ (jointly with GiZ and the World Bank)
- Option 2. Piloting and dissemination of Rural Development Council best practices driven by ARDCZ
- Option 3. Establishment of a joint Local Government Institute driven by ZILGA
- Option 4. Promotion of female Councilors and senior Staff driven by the Women in Local Government Forum

The options for support targeted a) institutional gaps in LA capacity building and b) self-sustaining, sector-wide capacity building approaches with a potential to feed into more elaborate performance assessment frameworks currently under development by an inter-ministerial working group. All options, except #3, were eventually supported through direct contracting with CLGF, VNG and the Zimbabwean ALAs, and option 1 was expanded to include the rural councils.

Complementarity - complementarity within the EU and with member states was explicitly aimed at, although not always easy to achieve in practice, especially with member states.

The civil society roadmaps in 107 countries have contributed to internal coherence, although they have a potential to be more problem-driven and focused on critical and/or promising issues and entry points. This process resulted in the thematic programme being by and large coherent with other EU programmes and processes supporting CSOs, notably the civil society envelope of multi-annual indicative programmes, but also with the growing number of standard projects (i.e. projects outside this envelope) that include civil society support or civil society engagement. The CSO roadmap template required an explicit analysis of the opportunities for complementarity with other EU instruments and programmes. It also promoted a joint member state development of the roadmap. These efforts at complementarity and synergy varied in their effectiveness from country to country. The factors that surfaced as influential included: available time and resources of staff at EU delegation and member state representation; rotation of staff and loss of institutional memory; the tendency to assign the focal point to relatively new or junior staff (although not in all cases and even if new and junior, the competency and commitment was not in doubt); the programme cycle, which did not always allow enough time for consultation or to fit in with the schedule of other programmes; relatively rigid procurement and contracting procedures, which did not allow easy accommodation with other programmes or with evolution of context (e.g. NGO legislation in Chad); differing

objectives; in some cases, competition between donors; and finally, the right to initiative, which prioritised civil society needs over harmonisation with other programmes. It is also worthy to note that in some cases the CSO and even potentially the LA part seeks a nuanced complementarity which doesn't imply blind alignment with bilateral programs where for example there are opportunities and the need to address sensitive issues for which it does not need the authorities' approval.
Local authorities, by contrast, did not in most cases benefit from a process similar to the civil society roadmaps.

Overall, the thematic programme had seven main areas of added value, especially for CSOs: absence of labelling; mobilisation in the absence of a bilateral framework or government approval; contribution to an enabling environment; reach; duration and amount. In some countries, these areas of value added were well identified and exploited, whereas in others, the use of CSO-LA was more opportunistic (small projects outside areas of concentration; top-ups) than strategic (with transaction costs that were justified compared to impact). As mentioned above, for LAs, the main area of value added was the dedicated direct support to LA innovations and effort to help CSOs and LAs work together.

With regards to complementarity with member states and other development partners, it ranged from quite poor (Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Senegal) to excellent (e.g. Colombia and Madagascar, see Box 8). Benefits of CSO roadmaps, in mapping who does what where and how and in setting joint objectives, were clear, but the extent to which they were translated into operational terms was limited: (i) often, there was no attempt to translate them into operational terms, or (ii) reluctance because member states were often interested in retaining maximum flexibility regarding a support to CSO that was scattered and project-based to begin with, and (iii) monitoring implementation of roadmaps was the exception rather than the norm. Sometimes, the Joint Programming process helped improve joint approaches to civil society and local authorities (e.g. Chad), sometimes it is the civil society roadmap that contributed to that, and fed the joint programming process (e.g. Madagascar, where there are few member states, and where there is a draft joint analysis but not joint strategy).

Box 2.8 Complementarity of CSO-LA with other EU and member states funding for CSOs

What was done and what was learnt – Thanks to its amounts and durations and themes, CSO-LA in Madagascar

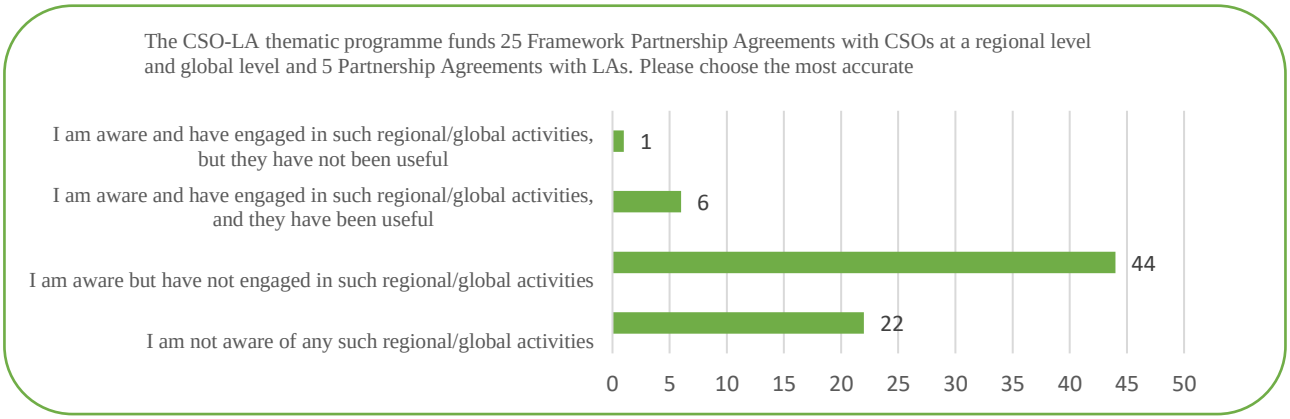
- fills a gap in the bilateral cooperation (e.g. EDF11 does not include funding for the social sectors, but CSO-LA funds health and social protection projects, albeit limited in scope)
- is complementary to other EU-funded actions supporting CSOs: particularly the multidonor Fanainga (between 25-200k€ 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;
- 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. For example, 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.

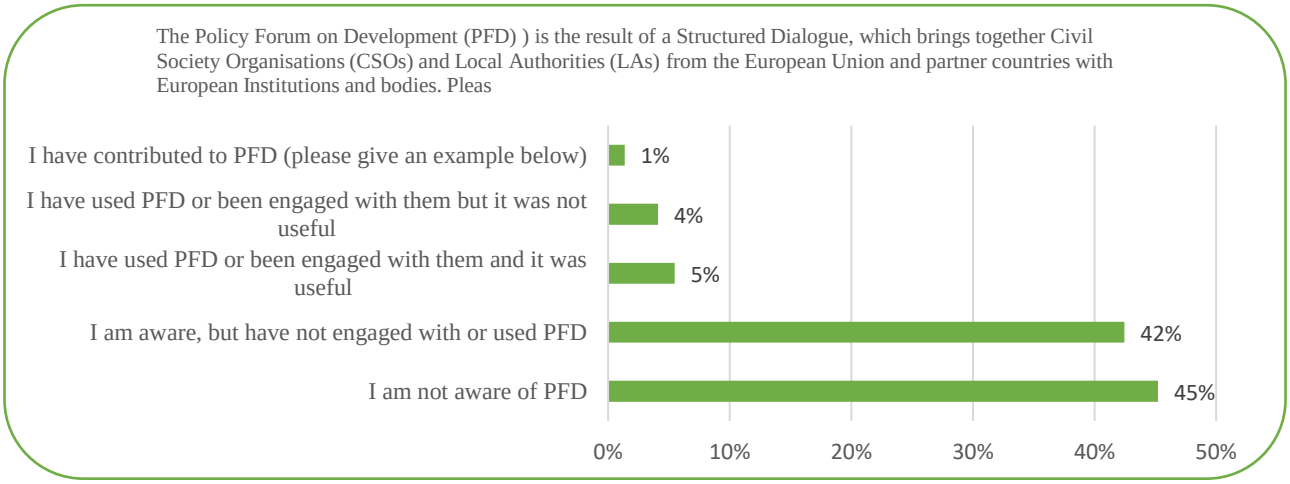
Country, regional and global interaction - the global and regional initiatives were not effective in reaching out to the country level. The global and regional initiatives have served to deepen the EU's engagement with civil society, especially through the policy forum for development, and especially in Europe. They have also served to create a space for civil society to interact with government, private sector and within itself. But apart from the roadmap facility, the other facilities have not engaged strongly with the delegations at country level (see figure 2.5). In general, the delegation demand for the facilities appears to have been low (other than the roadmap as noted earlier) and the reasons, besides limited delegation knowledge of them, are not clear. So far, the framework partnership agreements have not, yet, engaged with the EU delegations. In part, this can be explained by the pressure of time and resources within the framework partnership agreement consortiums and the EU delegations. It could also be partly explained by the fact that many were only started in 2018, which has not yet given enough time to roll out and contract activities across a consortium.

Figure 2.4 Knowledge of framework partnership agreements among CSO/LA focal points at the EU delegations.



Source: EU delegation survey

Figure 2.5 Knowledge of the policy forum for development among CSO/LA focal points at the EU delegations.



Source: EU delegation survey

Figure 2.5 shows the response from the delegations on their knowledge and familiarity with the policy forum for development. In the case of the policy forum for development, despite the regional events, the low level of engagement by the delegations at country level is ascribed to EU delegations being too busy, and there is a reported difficulty for policy forum for development members to get access to EU delegations. At global and regional levels, CSO umbrella organisations appreciate the opportunity of dialogue with EU institutions, but regret the one-off character of these events, and which rarely result in a more sustainable, iterative process.

Mix of modalities

The project approach, choice of mechanisms, and procedures were not ideal for reaching the ambitious and complex aims of the programme. The financial mechanisms available were not flexible enough in practice to support civil society and local authority associations' own strategic plans. Supporting and where necessary strengthening the organisation's own strategic plan is not a goal in itself but is important to the extent that it has benefits of increasing ownership of the agenda and promotion of civil society as independent development actors, internalising capacity development and governance as the accountability is to the organisation's strategic plan rather than the project document and reducing the "projectisation" of civil society actions. There was, in theory, a range of flexible financing mechanisms available to the delegations, but they were not used in practice. The main mechanisms used were the call for proposals, sometimes with compulsory on-granting (financial support to third parties). Direct negotiation was occasionally used where it was possible to apply (in cases of an organisation having a unique role, such as the Civil Forum in Senegal). Other possibilities, such as operating grants (core support) or follow-up grants or use of flexible procedures were not used, either because they were not sufficiently developed, or they were found too difficult and burdensome to apply in practice. An exception was the framework partnership agreements which usually had a multi-country presence. Where direct negotiation was used, it was often able to fund the strategic plans and actions of core civil society platforms and local authority associations. Under the call for proposals, projects were often developed specifically in response to the call. This meant that the programme funded new projects rather than improving and funding the core strategic activities and plans of the CSO. In some cases, EU provided strategic core funding but through facilities managed by other donors or multi-donor arrangements whose procedures were more flexible. Although on-granting was generally favourable for involving smaller, local CSOs, it also had drawbacks of its own. With on-granting, there was a tendency for capacity development of the small CSOs to focus on financial procedures. In some cases, the local CSOs benefitted from experience in managing funds but most found it too burdensome. On-granting also led to short implementation periods, as it took the lead applicant time to launch a downstream call for proposals, select, contract and train the local CSOs.

Some Delegations were very successful in identifying funding and making use of internal allocations for supporting the programme through active roadmap processes that engaged deeply and continuously with civil society. Examples of this are the Hoja de Ruta and other Delegation supported activities in Colombia as well as similar approaches in Brazil, Myanmar and elsewhere. In Myanmar in particular the approach led to a sub-national (provincial) engagement with CSOs.

Mix of modalities - the call for proposals were well managed, but even with innovation and good management they could not overcome the limits of the project approach. The call for proposals benefitted from the consultations and insights gained through the roadmap process. The use of a range

of flexible and innovative approaches was apparent from across the different countries such as the use of special lots and reservation of funding for national lead CSOs. The call for proposals as an implementation mechanism worked best for a project approach and where the ambition was in keeping with what could be achieved in a project. As noted earlier, it is difficult to achieve the ambition of the programme only or mainly through projects. The experience of CSOs and delegations raised some negative aspects arising from call for proposals including the risks that they:

- Encouraged competition rather than cooperation between the CSOs
- Created a large burden on CSOs in that only a few proposals can be financed
- Led to projects that were invented to score well on the criteria instead of representing the core work of the CSO and benefitting from earlier work
- Led to the design of highly ambitious projects in short time frames (if they are to win)
- Distorted the activities of the CSO as they engage in activities that are not their core area
- Created monopolies for those CSOs that are large and strong enough to find co-financing and prepare winning proposals

The flexibility that could be offered through the call for proposals ensured the right to initiative, but also tended to lead to an absence of geographic and thematic alignment with other EU support and potentially complicated the territorial approach.

Mix of modalities - most, but not all, CSOs and LAs found the EU procedures to be overly complex compared to other donors, and a barrier for achieving results. Lengthy, complicated grant selection procedures where winning a call for proposals was unpredictable were noted as shortcomings of the EU's support to civil society when compared to other donors. Similarly, competitive project applications did not resonate with many LAs, that found such a modality out of sync with on-budget finance procedures of LAs. Local CSOs especially compared the EU grant implementation procedures unfavourably with other donor approaches. Some CSOs appreciated the rules noting that they had the effect of improving internal financial management and administration. This, in turn, had the potential of improving their fundraising. Some of the mostly well-established (and usually international) CSOs appreciated the rules as they helped to prevent inefficiency and corruption. Typical statements from CSOs reacting negatively to the procedures include:

"We are tired of it being us to have to adapt to different donors' procedures. Those procedures should be adapted to the territory"

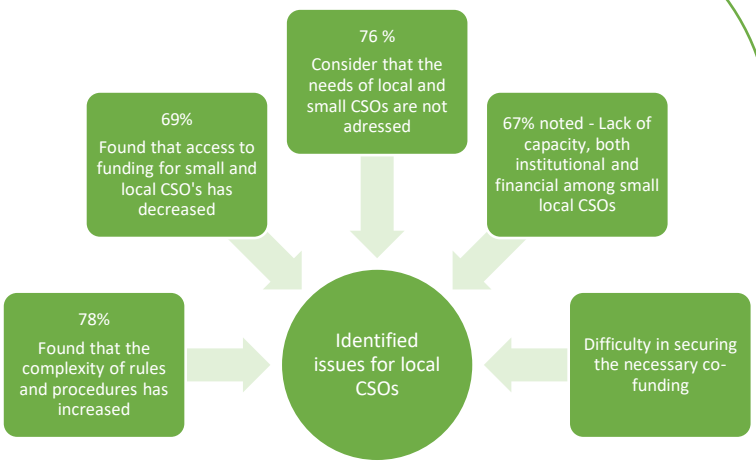
"The rules are part of the shrinking space for CSOs - The rules create a monopoly"

But on the other hand, there are also many, especially well-established CSOs that appreciate the rules and procedures:

"For us, the EU procedures are not too bad. If you have a good design and good relations with the delegation, then there is enough flexibility. Of course, it is not easy. But the rules are actually helpful and they reduce the risk of corruption – we can just point to the rules and say it is not possible. We have done this in many cases."

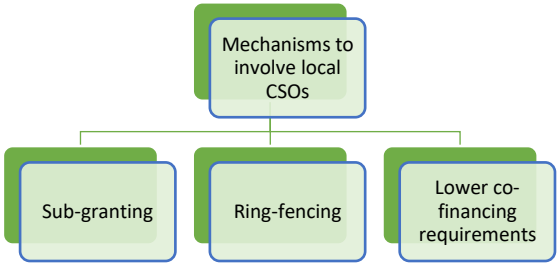
Box 2.9 Local CSOs

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 CSO's 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 CSO's had decreased in the previous 3-4 years (from 2013/2014 to 2017). Local CSO's 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.



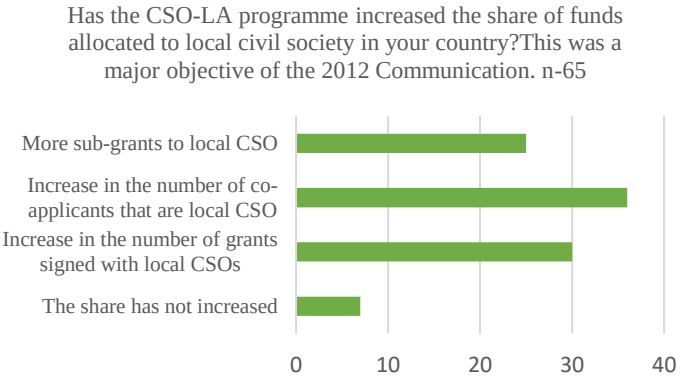
Source: Concord, 2017 and the authors

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 CSO's, such as ring-fencing, lower co-financing requirements, and sub-granting. Especially sub-granting has been taken up by the EUD's, whereas ring-fencing is less common (Concord, 2017) – a finding that was confirmed in the field visits where very little use of this mechanism was encountered. As noted earlier, even if the co-financing share for local CSOs is lowered, they often have difficulties with raising the e.g. 10% required. Pro and cons of sub-granting are discussed in section 2.3 Cooperation approach (mix of modalities).



Source: Concord, 2017 and the authors

According to 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 when the Concord survey was undertaken. 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. More information about EU's dialogue with and knowledge of local CSOs in vol II, annex 5, indicator 1.1.1. The 2018 DAC Peer Review of EU Development Cooperation found that measures taken to date to redress the balance for developing country-based CSOs - inter alia, ring-fenced funds, eased co-financing requirements and a greater role for delegations - have helped to maintain but not increase funding channeled to and through local CSOs (indicator 2.2.1 in vol II annex 5). As this review was based on data from 2018 it could indicate a consistent trajectory from 2017 (Concord) to 2018 (OECD) to 2020 (PEMconsult) of measures being taken and results in terms of local CSO involvement being realized.



Source: EUD Survey, 2020

Mix of modalities - the programme had to balance a series of trade-offs which influenced what could be achieved in practice. The programme was designed to promote a right to initiative thus establishing ownership by civil society and local authorities. This principle also recognised that civil society and local authorities were actors in their own right. The programme acknowledged that the CSOs and LAs being close to the issues were often best able to identify the needs. However, the right to initiative gave rise to some trade-offs such as the right to initiative versus geographic and thematic complementarity and the right to initiative versus focus on few priority areas to obtain cumulative impact. There was also a trade-off between selecting a few large or many smaller projects. Larger projects were dependent on high capacity CSOs. Potentially, large projects had greater impact and led to lower transaction costs for all. On the other hand, opening the possibility of many smaller projects would increase the scope for contracting by local CSOs. This trade-off was managed by increasing the use of third part financing, whereby a portion of the grant, often as high as 65% was allocated for on-granting to local CSOs. Here again, there was a trade-off observed because whilst on-granting ensured that local CSOs were contractually empowered, it also had a tendency to delay implementation. Another unintended consequence was that it also led to a strong focus on ensuring adherence to financial procedures, which in some cases detracted from core project activities and increased transaction costs for the local CSOs. In general, the financial procedures were found too complex for local CSOs. The trade-off between financial prudence and involvement of local CSOs tended to go in favour of financial prudence. In Box 9 more details about the local CSOs can be found.

The pre-selection of concept notes helped to lessen wastage in preparing project proposals. The process of calls for proposals had to balance ensuring an open competition and space for new ideas and actors with the cost of preparing proposals that were not selected. Across the countries visited on average 62% of full proposals were not selected and 72% of concept notes prepared did not make it to the proposal stage. This represents a high investment by the CSOs. A trade-off was also observed between the demand for measurable results within the lifetime of the project, and engagement in the less measurable process of policy influence. This could have been one of the factors that explain the weight of project effort on direct service delivery, and the lesser attention given to how to sustain the benefits and replicate them without donor support.

Ensuring transparency and open competition also had a trade-off as it favoured the call for individual projects over providing core support to strategic plans or entering into strategic partnership agreements. Where direct negotiation was possible, it was often used to advantage for funding core, strategic actions. Even though there was a wide range of financial mechanisms available on paper in practice, as outlined in a report on funding delivery mechanisms by Concord (2016) they were not used to the extent they could have been. The project-based call for proposals was the dominating mechanism. And, although the calls were well managed, they could not overcome the limits of the project approach. In some situations, the calls encouraged competition rather than cooperation between CSOs. They encouraged high ambition and sometimes led to projects being invented in response to the call. And, as noted above, they led to trade-offs that made it difficult to engage in longer-term sector wide interventions that had greater prospects of sustainability and impact. These trade-offs were managed to some extent by the use of FPAs. But in some cases, not even the FPAs could meet all the needs. For example, the national and international associations of LAs, under the framework partnership-LAs had their own identities of a political nature. As such they were more interested in recognition, policy dialogue, process and core business support rather than the projects and financial support on offer from the framework partnership agreement.

The ambition of the programme and the modalities involved in managing multiple projects stretched the capacities of the delegations on occasions, putting unreasonable pressure on staff. The priority, skill set, and resources allocated to the programme was not always in tune with the scale of expectations. This also caused a trade-off between resources allocated, and the degree to which complicated processes such as the roadmap could be followed up and reported on.

Monitoring and learning - programme-level learning took place, however, monitoring was weak. Project-level monitoring was robust but tended to focus on accountability and not performance or impact. The programme was not monitored, there is no programme level reporting. Although the programme did not benefit from impact monitoring, it was able to learn from reflection and dialogue with civil society and the delegations. Learning was also supported through mechanisms such as the roadmap facility and the policy forum for development. The changes made in 2017/18, half-way through the programme, are an indication of how learning also led to significant adjustments.

At country level, result frameworks were set up as part of the roadmaps, mainly for the CSO part of the programme. Some countries carried out extensive monitoring of the roadmaps, but most did not. In general, there was little linkage of the impact of individual projects to how they served the country roadmap goals.

Project-level monitoring was strong but tended to focus on accountability and not performance or impact. Monitoring and reporting were systematically carried out. Accountability and adherence to procedures was emphasised more than learning or monitoring outcomes and impact. An unintended consequence, as noted by one CSO observer, is that focus is on management and supervision rather than promoting impact or change (in practices among government and citizens). Evaluations of project level were often conducted with very small budgets, which led to poor quality especially combined with a tendency in some countries not to be critical of actions funded by the client. Another unintended consequence of the programme is that the strict monitoring and its links to release of funding tended to make the CSOs and LAs accountable to the EUD rather than to their own internal governance structures and the citizens they are meant to represent.

2.4 Development education and awareness raising

EQ8 - To what extent and how have CSOs and LAs proven to be effective actors to implement the EU DEAR strategy and achieve the EU DEAR objectives?
EQ9 - To what extent and how has the CSO-LA Thematic Programme helped to achieve EU DEAR objectives?

Summary of findings

- DEAR was unique in its scope, being the only EU-funded programme that explicitly connects global development issues with actions aimed at EU citizens
- CSOs and LAs are well placed to work on DEAR issues
- Despite the absence of a theory of change, and a common results and monitoring framework that would provide a strategic approach to implementing the DEAR objectives, the DEAR programme worked in a coherent way through a highly complementary set of modalities
- There is a limited number of local authorities in the lead of CfP-funded actions.
- There is evidence of results achieved by the DEAR programme, but whether CfP-funded actions were able to reach out to more EU citizens cannot be verified.
- Projects funded under the DEAR component have contributed to a better integration of development issues into formal and non-formal education in EU MS.
- The value-added of GENE and NSC in pursuing global education is being recognised by stakeholders. The institutionalisation of global education into formal and non-formal education is an ongoing effort which depends on political contexts in member states.
- The DEAR programme's emphasis on large CSO-LA consortia across multiple EU MS has positive effects, but can also be detrimental to efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the actions.

DEAR was unique in its scope, being the only EU-funded programme that explicitly connects global development issues with actions aimed at EU citizens. Being implemented primarily by CSOs and LAs, the programme assigns a role for citizens to play in advancing policy coherence for development: one of its underlying premises is that civil society is able to influence policy-making at national and EU-levels, once citizens are equipped with the knowledge and tools to understand the global interconnectedness of key issues such as climate change, migration, social justice, as well as the universality of the fundamental values underpinning the EU.

CSOs and LAs are well placed to work on DEAR issues. The 2014-2020 MIP stresses that "Civil Society Organisations are well placed to highlight development challenges as well as the impact of policies and behaviours in Europe on development elsewhere. CSOs often have a vast experience in fostering the European public's understanding and recognition of the significance of development decisions and actions for people globally and have usually established strong relations with relevant actors as well as citizens. […] These actors have historically often been at the origin of DEAR activities in Member States and remain important contributors to the evolution of DEAR policy and practice in Europe." In absence of a specific DEAR theory of change, the programme recognises the historical role that CSOs have played in advancing and implementing DEAR objectives over many decades, as well as attributing legitimacy to DEAR actors because of their assumed proximity to citizens. There is also an underlying assumption that CSOs and LAs enjoy greater trust of citizens than other players. The sample of projects examined for the evaluation was implemented by a wide range of organisations, not all of which, however, are necessarily representative of citizens or had identifiable constituencies.

Despite the absence of a theory of change, and a common results and monitoring framework that would provide a strategic approach to implementing the DEAR objectives, the DEAR programme worked in a coherent way through a highly complementary set of modalities. This ranges from "right-to-initiative" actions (projects funded through CfPs), including a sub-granting facility to small, indigenous grass-roots level organisations, to strategic grants aimed at amplifying DEAR results by pursuing DEAR objectives through policy makers at EU member state level and beyond. In this way, DEAR was able to create a balance between actors with various strengths and added value. Through the small-grants facility, DEAR funding has become accessible to small and medium-sized CSOs across EU Member States, and which otherwise would not be able to access such funding. The facility also recognises that actions in particular at local levels often do not need significant amounts of funding to work towards DEAR objectives. Funding also goes to more experienced CSOs which have the capacity skills, experience, and expertise to work on a pan-European level, and to partnering groups of NGO coalitions to coordinate efforts during their respective government's EU presidencies, which contributes to an increase in the effectiveness of the work of the national coalitions. These organisations bring specific value-added to the programme, as their established status allows them to draw on organisational strengths and structures that amplify results. The 2016 and 2018 CfPs acknowledged the different situation CSOs from EU 13 MS are finding themselves in, and the CfPs have eased specific conditions that allow CSOs from these countries to access funding. As the operating environment for these organisations is becoming more and more hostile, they are often the only organisations that implement activities that work in support of DEAR objectives and which are in direct alignment with fundamental European values. DEAR also has a small number of grants to highly strategic organisations which recognise that the institutionalisation of global education into EU member states formal and non-formal education frameworks can maximise the impact of the DEAR funding. A DEAR Support Team has become a learning hub highly valued by stakeholders, which is providing cross-action technical and learning support to projects, as well as analytical insight at programme level.

There is a limited number of local authorities in the lead of CfP-funded actions. Where LAs are in the lead of project, this tends to work best in a setting where there is a strong partnership with CSOs, and which often deal with the day-to-day implementation of the project, while local authorities provide the political support and legitimacy to events and actions.

There is evidence of results achieved by the DEAR programme. These include awareness raising leading to citizens' engagements in a multitude of projects funded through an on-granting project, and where small amounts of funding have had catalytic effects. A project implemented by the World Wildlife Fund has led to a change in the consumption behaviour of millions of European citizens, by adopting a holistic approach including consumer awareness raising and working with stakeholders in the seafood supply chain, but also by strategically using the evidence and best practices created by the project to advocate for policy changes at the European level, thereby potentially amplifying the results.

Whether CfP-funded actions were able to reach out to more EU citizens cannot be verified. Most projects operated with over-ambitious results frameworks, and there was a tendency to come up with very high quantitative targets. These were, however, not independently verifiable, and data collection and collation methods tended to differ between projects. This is ultimately an accountability challenge, as projects should be held accountable for the targets they set themselves, and indicators should be created in such a way that they can be checked.

Projects funded under the DEAR component have contributed to a better integration of development issues into formal and non-formal education in EU MS. Global education objectives (i.e. the "DE" part of the DEAR programme) have been traditionally implemented by CSOs and LAs (as part of actions funded under the CfPs), as well as by the Global Education Network Europe (GENE) and the North-South Centre (NSC) of the Council of Europe. Within the CSO-LA stakeholders, different approaches were apparent. On the one hand, the Bridge 47 pursued a highly strategic approach in providing and advocating, at national and European levels, for a roadmap for the implementation of SDG sub-goal 4.7. On the other hand, for CSOs in the EU 13 MS, such as in Romania, the DEAR funding was used to actually engage directly, at the very grassroots level, with students in schools, as well as using the projects to create, maintain, and nurture a community of practitioners at the respective country levels—often in contexts where there is decreasing political willingness to further global education issues, and where no funding is available to provide tools to educators to engage in global education.

The value-added of GENE and NSC in pursuing global education is being recognised by stakeholders. The engagement of GENE and NSC is a recognition of the unique strategic role both organisations can play in institutionalising global education in Member States' education systems. GENE has established and is maintaining (with consecutive funding rounds from the DEAR programme) a unique network of institutional contacts in ministries of education and ministries of foreign affairs, as well as other decision-making bodies in EU Member states. This has resulted in a vibrant community of decision-makers that share best practices and lessons learned, and which have, to some degree, been able to influence global education being incorporated into participating member states' education systems. GENE has further strengthened its strategic importance through the establishment of voluntary peer review processes, as well as the establishment of an academicians' network in the area of global education. GENE is cooperating, where opportunities arise, with actions on global education that are being funded from the 2016 CfP. The NSC also uses its unique access to Council of Europe member states as well as the institutional structure and procedures of the Council of Europe to systematise global education in member states' education systems.

The institutionalisation of global education into formal and non-formal education is an ongoing effort which depends on political contexts in member states. Global Education, and in fact the entire DEAR programme centres around the fundamental values of the European Union. As has become increasingly evident over the past decade or so, these values have come under pressure, and with this, the commitment of member states to the promotion and institutionalisation of global education has oscillated – both GENE and NSC activities have had to adjust working methods and schedules to these changing contexts.

The DEAR programme's emphasis on large CSO-LA consortia across multiple EU MS results in trade-offs: it has positive effects, but can also hamper efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the actions. CfP-funded actions have been required to demonstrate partnerships across a considerable number of EU MS. As the only dedicated programme of its kind at EU-level, the rationale for a truly pan-European character of funded actions is clear. At the same time, the size of the consortia has become difficult to manage, with losses in terms of time and human resources to bring projects underway and to maintain responsible, even implementation across consortia partners. Lead-CSOs often have responsibility for consortium partners without having a history of previous cooperation with them, and where it is a considerable challenge to establish common working structures and objectives, as well as to ensure that resources are spent in accordance with project plans. There have been numerous stakeholder voices regretting that the high intensity of

administrative requirements caused by such a multitude of partners essentially come in the way of effective project implementation, and it is clear from stakeholder interviews and document review that the additional efforts in managing these large-size consortia is not necessarily outweighed by better results. Rather, a picture emerges where it is difficult for consortia to form a coherent approach around joint action, and where there is a core group of CSOs that are very active, while others remain on the margins without bringing their weight to bear. The size of the projects makes monitoring a particular challenge, and the ROM monitoring mechanism is unable, because of the sheer geographic spread of the consortia, to provide more than select checks on projects. This is an unintended consequence of the programme and creates issues around accountability.

3 Conclusions and recommendations

The overall conclusions across the analysis of strategic relevance, results and cooperation approach and the nine evaluation questions can be summarised as follows:

1. The CSO-LA programme was highly relevant and achieved some important results. However, the ambition level was high compared to the challenges faced and the modalities and measures available.
2. The programme was highly dependent, for its effect, on complementarity with EU, member states, and other actions. Complementarity with other EU actions was stronger than complementarity with member states and other development partners.
3. The civil society element of the programme was tailored to the country context although this was not mandatory and less the case for the local authorities.
4. The CSO-LA programme modalities were better suited to supporting local authorities when working through associations of local authorities.
5. The CSO-LA programme achieved some promising results from cooperation with associations of local authorities, especially where efforts were sustained over time.
6. Although evidence was found of CSO capacities increasing, capacity development was generally not measured and was weaker on internal governance.
7. Service delivery projects were used as an entry point for promoting change. But they were not always designed to promote better policies and better government accountability. As a result, their impact, sustainability, and scalability were limited.
8. The programme operated under a set of complex priorities, principles and modalities. These led to trade-offs in what could be achieved in practice.
9. Programme-level learning took place although programme-level monitoring was weak. Project level monitoring was regular but tended to focus on financial accountability and outputs rather than impact.
10. The DEAR programme worked through a convincing, well thought through combination of call for proposals (soliciting proposals on the “marketplace of ideas”); operating strategic directly negotiated grants; and including small CSOs through sub-granting, as well as a highly valued learning hub provided by the DEAR support team.
11. Effectiveness of the DEAR programme was impacted by the lack of a clear theory of change and a results framework of the programme, and a joined-up understanding of what a “successful” DEAR project constitutes.
12. The size of the DEAR consortia led to trade-offs in terms of efficiency and effectiveness losses and poses accountability challenges. Existing monitoring mechanisms are not capturing the complexity of the projects, further exacerbating accountability issues.

Conclusion 1 - The CSO-LA programme was highly relevant and achieved some important results. However, the ambition level was high compared to the challenges faced and the modalities and measures available.

There is evidence that the programme contributed to increased capacity of civil society organisations and to a lesser extent local authorities. Despite the absence of programme level monitoring and reporting against a results framework, some evidence was found that the programme had contributed towards enhancing the enabling environment for civil society. Similarly, there was some evidence that the programme had contributed to increased participation in democratic governance and the capacity of civil society organisations and, to a lesser extent, local authorities. Through promoting cooperation between civil society and local authorities there have been some notable contributions towards service delivery and local economic development.

The programme objectives were relevant given the shrinking space for civil society and the challenges faced by local authorities. However, the ambition of the programme was very high given the scale and nature of these challenges. The gap between the ambition of the programme and what could be achieved in reality, given the timescale and resources available, was large. This was especially the case in countries where the space for civil society and local governance were repressed, and this called for a finer-grained approach of the issues and actors to target than was applied. The goal to influence the enabling environment of LAs, build their capacity and pilot territorial approaches through a small actor-based programme was particularly ambitious.

Conclusion 2 - The programme was highly dependent, for its effect, on complementarity with EU, member states, and other actions. Complementarity with other EU actions was stronger than complementarity with member states and other development partners.

Where the policy dialogue of the EU and member states acted in unison there were notable results. Examples were found in a number of countries. In Colombia for example, the EU and members states made supportive statements on curbing assassination of social leaders, which shielded civil society actors and encouraged them to continue their work. In Myanmar, the head of delegation took active part in sub-national dialogue, which served to signal the importance of civil society in a context where it was increasingly seen as irrelevant or even usurping government. Complementarity was weaker in Chad, for example, where development partners (who are very few) rarely came together to share experiences and strategies vis-à-vis CSOs.

The CSO roadmaps aimed at fostering a common EU and member state response. They also identified opportunities for coherent action across EU development cooperation programmes and instruments. However, these intentions proved difficult to implement due to a variety of barriers. It was not easy, whilst upholding the right to initiative, to achieve thematic and sub-national geographic alignment and ensure coordination, where it was appropriate to do so, with complementary bilateral programmes which were government owned. The complexity of the programme and the rigid demands of the programme cycle were also found challenging by the EU delegations. Moreover, the call for proposals, which entailed highly specific procedures, made it difficult to coordinate actions with other programmes - particularly those financed by other donors and member states. In some cases, the competitive process was found by CSOs to be a barrier to cooperation between CSOs.

For these reasons, linkages with other programmes and initiatives were often absent or weak and as a result, the sustainability and replicability of local successes were in doubt. The situation improved

between the first and second generation of CSO roadmaps and after the mid-term assessment of the programme.

Regarding LAs, the added value of the programme was funding for LA innovations, but the complementarity at country level was difficult to assess. The call for proposals were based on thematic and geographic tailoring, but not on LA roadmaps or similar subnational framework diagnostics with a mapping of relevant donor support. This made programme complementarity vis-à-vis other programmes and how pilots were seen to inform wider processes unclear. In general, the case countries only made one call with a specific LA budget line, which also meant that there could have been lesser scope to underline LA support with a deeper LA diagnostic. Zimbabwe is an interesting case where the dwindling of the overall EU funding triggered new thinking about how the programme could adopt a strategic approach for local government. This led to a sector approach by building on strategic plans of the associations of LAs and by linking the support to other programmes financed by the EU, GIZ and the World Bank. Similarly, in Chad, lessons learnt from the LA portion of the programme fed directly into later EU funding to LAs. These examples point to the gradual realisation, in some countries, that cooperation with CSOs and particularly LAs was better done when working strategically and with other programmes.

There is some evidence of interactions between regional/global support and country-level support, however, these interactions remain very limited and multi-country alliances could be increasingly important given shrinking civic space. Increasing awareness of regional/global CSO-LA activities at country level and increasing networking, and alliance building between local, regional and global levels, are within reach e.g. through a web-based mapping of all CSO-LA activities and events. Alliances that connect CSOs/networks of CSOs at country-, regional and global level could be increasingly important, given the interconnectedness of issues CSOs are addressing (e.g. biodiversity and climate change, trade and investment…). Linking national CSOs to wider regional and global alliances could also contribute to a level of protection of national CSOs, as international exposure might prevent crackdowns on actors in a country.

Conclusion 3 - The civil society element of the programme was tailored to the country context although this was not mandatory and less the case for the local authorities.

The concept notes, which were originally prepared to inform the programme design, included both CSOs and LAs. The roadmaps were only for CSOs, although in a few countries the roadmaps went beyond CSOs and included LAs. LA roadmaps started very late and was not compulsory nor funded, which undoubtably is a contributing factor for the lesser tailoring. In total, four LA road maps were prepared with DEVCO assistance (Chad, Mali, Colombia, Ecuador) and a further two countries (Guatemala and Zimbabwe) prepared their own.

The quality of CSO and LA roadmaps and underlying dialogue varied. However, in general they were found to have triggered a valuable process of consultation, even if they did not always get that far. Most importantly, where they worked, they enabled joint problem analysis, and a tailoring of the programme to the country needs and context. They also provided a solid basis for prioritisation of the calls for proposals and wider EU dialogue with government. In some countries, the consultation and roadmaps were particularly highly developed. In those countries, they became important processes for enhancing the enabling environment, participation and capacity development of civil society. Four examples include i) the roadmap in Colombia; ii) the sub-national based consultations in Zimbabwe;

iii) the second generation of CSO roadmaps in Myanmar which engaged local civil society in the regions and states and, iv) the innovative CSO-driven approaches in Brazil. The second generation of CSO roadmaps built on learning from the first generation and in many countries, this led to a strong learning within the country.

However, there were also weaknesses. In most cases, the CSO roadmaps did not deeply examine the political environment or weaknesses in the internal governance of civil society and the CSOs. Nor did they explore the issue of the precarious financial sustainability of many CSOs. In most cases, the CSO roadmaps and consultation process was centred on the more established CSOs. They were rarely able to reach beyond the capital city (e.g. Myanmar; Ukraine) or reach a diversified range of civil society actors (unions, media, traditional and religious leaders, indigenous groups, artist collectives, online activists) – notable exceptions include Chad, Colombia, Madagascar, Uganda and Zimbabwe where remote areas were targeted for consultations and/or projects. The LA component of the programme suffered from the absence of roadmaps and as a result, unlike for civil society, this component did not benefit from a structured national dialogue and strategy to guide the approach, except in the few countries where LA roadmaps and strategies were developed.

Conclusion 4 - The CSO-LA programme modalities were better suited to supporting local authorities when working through associations of local authorities.

In many contexts, it was difficult for LAs to directly engage with the call for proposal approach as they were not used to developing proposals in competition and did not have easy mechanisms to receive and report on use of external funds. This was recognised during the programme and adjustments were made midway in 2017/18. Moreover, the absence of the necessary diagnostic analysis and a structured dialogue with the LAs to sustain and link local capacity support and innovation to a wider reform process or wider learning, diminished the potential for more scalable programme achievements. The key issue is that most LAs and LA frameworks are weak in a development context. Tailoring LA capacity support to the local context would entail that the programme interventions distinguished between inherent capacity gaps in individual LAs (remoteness, educational levels, capture) and capacity gaps linked to inappropriate frameworks. The latter, where many of the capacity problems are found in the developing world, needs to be addressed at the national level and call for proposals had difficulties to identify and add value to challenges in de-concentration and decentralisation. Often, the programme did not have the resources and local skill-set to engage with this complex and demanding task, and the LA part of the CSO-LA programme became de-linked from more comprehensive LA reforms and support programmes.

Where the context allowed and the EU delegation was able to use a flexible approach, the CSO-LA support played a meaningful role by engaging with associations of LAs and providing the means and incentives for CSOs and LAs to work together, as was evident particularly in Chad, Madagascar, Zimbabwe and Colombia. Associations of LAs were supported in their advocacy dissemination of best practice role and capturing lessons learned from pilots and innovations in individual LAs. Where this support from the programme was combined with other, more comprehensive instruments and linked to national initiatives and to support from other donors, there were even better prospects of success.

Conclusion 5 – The CSO-LA programme achieved some promising results from cooperation especially with associations of local authorities and particularly where efforts were sustained over time.

Capacity development for LAs was challenged by the modality of short-term localised interventions which were difficult to sustain and upscale even where the focal areas were highly relevant. The modalities sometimes led to a situation where there was a tendency to fill gaps in systems that did not work and which needed deeper reform for innovations to take root. In general, the more the programme modality resembled the way that mainstream local government programmes are designed and implemented the better the results. The track record in Zimbabwe and some of the other countries showed that it was possible to create meaningful results even in a crisis-prone environment. Key to creating such results was the engagement of associations of LAs as implementors, and adoption of sector-wide approaches and longer-term support. However, although the association of LAs were key, they were not always effective or even present in all countries. Associations LAs are mostly fragile organisations that need longer term institutional support beyond what project-level support could deliver. There were well-meaning attempts to create wider international links between national associations of LAs and regional and global associations of LAs through framework partnership agreement-LA interventions. But the evidence from the field is that capacity development of associations of LAs through this platform can only complement, not substitute country level support for association of LAs. There is also more scope for synergies and cooperation between country level and regional capacity support.

EU delegations were not well informed about in-country framework partnership agreement activities, and national framework partnership agreement representatives could not always access funding to participate in regional training workshops, or found the benefit of such workshops disproportionate to the time and effort needed to participate. Moreover, according to representatives from national associations of local authorities, there appears to be an untapped potential for more synergy between support to regional LA advocacy (for example within the framework the African Union and the UCLG-Africa Section) and capacity support to national associations of local authorities. Regional advocacy was not as strong as it could be in part because the elected association of LA representatives needed more sustained support across election terms to strengthen regional advocacy. This support could be rendered through support to regional or sub-regional networks of CEOs from the national associations of local authorities.

Conclusion 6 - Although evidence was found of CSO capacities increasing, capacity development was generally not measured and was weaker on internal governance.

No country visited except Colombia had a system to measure capacity development changes year to year. Nevertheless, evidence was found of CSO capacities increasing in terms of programme, project and financial management, and, to a lesser extent, on technical capacities to implement their agenda, such as analysis and advocacy, and sector-specific capacities in health, water and sanitation, and small-scale infrastructure. International CSOs were generally good at building on local knowledge and on transferring international skills to local CSOs. Across the five dimensions of CSO capacity development [(i) legitimacy, credibility and internal governance; (ii) capacity to learn and change; (iii) programme and project management; (iv) research and evidence-based advocacy; (v) organisation, coordination and collaboration, the programme and project management part was strongest.

Change in terms of internal governance (planning and decision-making processes; accountability to populations; inclusiveness of leadership), which is a key driver of CSO capacity development, was less visible. The short duration of most CSO-LA projects sometimes biased capacity development towards meeting EU reporting requirements at the expense of discussions on how to collectively increase influence and impact (Chad, Myanmar, Tajikistan, Zimbabwe).

Financial sustainability of CSOs was a key issue that constrained their capacity. In some countries, there were successful attempts at leveraging the CSO-LA experience to raise funds from government or from other donors such as happened in Brazil. There were some cases where the programme capacity development activities resulted in the raising of local revenues. In Myanmar, a 10-point plan for developing local CSO capacity to improve financial sustainability was put forward by an international NGO as part of a programme-funded project. But in general, the precarious financial situation that many CSOs find themselves in was not addressed through capacity development or other measures.

The CSO-LA's capacity development efforts had most value for money when it supported cross-country learning and coalition-building. When this happened (e.g. in Madagascar and Myanmar), capacity development translated into more CSO influence on policies and government accountability. Better communication between regional/global framework partnership agreement-CSOs and country-level support would aid the empowerment of local CSOs, both in terms of technical capacities and ability to network, learn, advocate and protect civic space and activists. Capacity development was limited by what could be achieved through relatively short-term projects focused on the creation of tangible results. By financing projects and not the internal strategic plans, the programme missed an opportunity to more directly strengthen the core institutional capacity of CSOs.

Conclusion 7 - Service delivery projects were used as an entry point for promoting change. But they were not always designed to promote better policies and better government accountability. As a result, their impact, sustainability, and scalability were limited.

In some countries, projects were focussed on service delivery and local economic development with the intention that the results would create entry points for supporting change in policy and practice at the local government level and among citizens. There were some cases where this took place, mainly because the Delegation saw opportunities for impact beyond the project's scope and duration and decided to arbitrate between the demand for measurable results within the lifetime of the project, and engagement in the less measurable process of policy influence. But in many other situations, the shift from services delivered through projects to enhancing policy and policy implementation did not take place at a significant scale. Where CSOs piloted innovative approaches to employment of rural youth, for example, the cost of the new approaches; the future source of funding; and the institutional involvement of local government was not considered early enough.

There is evidence of service delivery and economic development results that responded to dire needs of some of the most marginal, vulnerable, and poor communities. In Northern Uganda, the GLOserve project even demonstrated a textbook link between programme piloting on behalf of a national community development programme. However, the sustainability of the projects was in most other cases, in doubt, because the projects were small; of a short duration; not able to create a critical mass of change; and not viable without external funding. In the absence of further donor funding, the replication of many project results was also uncertain. This was well-recognised by some EUDs

especially in countries such as Indonesia where the scale of the country was huge in comparison with the funds dedicated to CSOs-LA programme. In such countries it was particularly clear that the scale of the CSO-LA programme and the relatively few and small projects it could finance was unlikely to achieve a critical mass of change in particular when the projects are disseminated over many islands and provinces each with their own specificities. While CSOs-LAs projects in Indonesia had brought citizens and local government closer together and enhanced improved public awareness on the role of LAs in-service provisions and increased LA awareness (in line with their mandate) to effectively deliver public services, the role of CSOs was limited for enhancing LAs participation in the formulation of national/sector policies affecting the local level. For instance, the ecotourism project in Flores has increased the LAs involvement on village joint governance approach. However, this has had a little influence on the other Indonesian local authorities based in other provinces and on national authorities in Jakarta for adapting their response to urbanisation phenomenon. As regards projects disseminated over this huge territory, that is no evidence that those small CSOs initiatives have leveraged a massive awareness and ownership of Indonesian citizens and LA for change.

Conclusion 8 - The programme operated under a set of complex priorities, principles and modalities. These led to trade-offs in what could be achieved in practice.

The right to initiative was an important principle that brought benefits but also gave rise to some trade-offs. A key trade off was that it was difficult, with the right to initiative, to also ensure geographic and thematic complementarity. A further trade-off was although on granting (third-party financing) led to the contractual involvement of many small CSOs it tended to lead to delayed implementation and short implementation periods. It also led to a strong focus on ensuring adherence to financial procedures, which many local CSOs found too complex and detracted from the core activities of the project. In other cases, the local CSOs benefitted from experience in managing funds.

Calls for proposals enabled an open and transparent competition, but it was difficult using this mechanism to fund core strategic plans and actions of the CSOs. At country level where direct negotiation was possible it was often used to great advantage for funding core, strategic actions. At the global level the framework partnership agreements also enabled funding of the core strategic plans of the CSOs. Although the calls for proposals were well designed and managed, they could not overcome the limits of the project approach. In some situations, the calls encouraged competition rather than cooperation between CSOs. And there was a tendency for the CSOs to adjust their activities and define projects to meet the priority of the calls instead of being financed to continue their core work. The call for proposals, the project cycle of contracting and the responsibility for project level monitoring and control put considerable pressure on the staff of the delegation and reduced the resources available for monitoring how the programme was contributing to the programme and roadmap goals at the country level.

Conclusion 9 – Programme-level learning took place although programme-level monitoring was weak. Project level monitoring was regular but tended to focus on financial accountability and outputs rather than impact.

The CSO-LA programme did not have a robust results framework at outcome and impact level- although as noted under conclusion 5 not for capacity development aspects. Although indicators at activity and output level were defined in the multi-annual indicative programmes for use at programme level, they were not used in practice. Apart from DEAR activities, there is no attempt at overall programme monitoring or annual reporting. The support facilities were in general under-

utilised in this connection. The programme is complex, and admittedly not easy to monitor at outcome and impact level.

However, even though there was an absence of monitoring, there were instances where the learning by the programme was impressive. Firstly, the programme design itself clearly took into account lessons from the earlier non-state actors programme (2007-2013). Secondly, the programme at headquarters found ways of learning from reflection and dialogue with civil society and the EU delegations. This occurred through the annual focal point meetings and was further supported through mechanisms such as the roadmap facility and the policy forum for development. This learning led to significant programme adjustments, which were reflected in a new multi-annual indicative programme for the period 2018-2020.

At country level, result frameworks were set up as part of the roadmaps, mainly for the CSO part of the programme. Compulsory monitoring of the roadmaps was dropped after the first year of the programme, and whilst some countries carried out extensive monitoring, most did not. A common weakness was that, in general, there was little linkage between the impact of individual projects and how they contributed in aggregate to country programme and roadmap goals.

Project-level monitoring and reporting was strong and systematically carried out but tended to focus on accountability and not impact. Accountability and adherence to procedures was emphasised more than learning or monitoring of outcomes and impact. As noted by one CSO observer, the focus was on management and supervision rather than promoting impact or change. Project monitoring, especially financial monitoring was strict and tended to make the CSOs and LAs accountable to the EU delegation, rather than their own governance structures.

Conclusion 10 - The DEAR programme worked through a convincing, well thought through combination of actors (through calls for proposals, on the "marketplace of ideas"; operating strategic directly negotiated grants; and including small CSOs through sub-granting; as well as a highly valued learning hub provided by the DEAR support team). There has been evidence of some results.

The DEAR programme has worked through a complementary set of actors. This included small, grass-roots level organisations, which, with small amounts of DEAR funding provided through a sub-granting project, were able to work on DEAR objectives at the local level. Other actions were implemented by CSOs, and where established and experienced CSOs joined forces across EU MS. Other objectives, still, were pursued through highly strategic direct grants to organisation with unique access to decision-makers to pursue DEAR objectives at the institutional level in EU MS.

Projects were often too ambitious in their scope, and this might be a result of overstating targets in the application process in order to increase chances of funding. This led to numerous examples where it is not possible to independently verify results reported, or where the reporting is not at the same level of ambition as the funding application.

Nonetheless, there was evidence of results, in particular at the level of community engagement, changes in consumer behaviour, and policy advocacy. It is not possible to say what the aggregate results are of DEAR projects funded through CfPs, though, as the "right to initiative" has led, even despite a narrowing down of themes in the 2018 CfP, to a wide spectrum of projects that cannot necessarily be compared with one another.

There is evidence of results at the level of institutionalising global education, as through GENE and NSC, a continuous process is underway with Member States, drawing on peer review and other activities.

Conclusion 11 - The effectiveness of the DEAR programme was impacted by the lack of a clear theory of change and a results framework of the programme, resulting in the lack of an understanding of what a "successful" DEAR project constitutes.

The programme operates through a portfolio of complementary activities, and in accordance with the overall DEAR objectives as stated in the 2014-2020 MIP. However, a clear strategic framework is missing, as well as a theory of change on how to achieve strategic objectives and, resulting from this, a results framework with measurable indicators that are applicable across all projects.

As a consequence, projects are free to interpret DEAR objectives in a wide variety of ways and using different methodologies of establishing indicators, many of which are impossible to verify. There is no understanding, shared across the programme and among actors, what public awareness, or public mobilisation and engagement mean, nor what the nexus between these actions is. It is therefore not possible to come to conclusions as to what a successful DEAR project is.

Over the years, and at least since the 2010 DEAR Study, there have been recommendations that have been directed at strengthening the strategic framework of the programme, however, most of these remain, as yet, unimplemented. There has also been continuous feedback from DEAR stakeholders on programming aspects, but it has not always been clear how these have been taken on board in subsequent programming.

Conclusion 12 - The size of the DEAR consortia led to trade-offs in terms of efficiency and effectiveness losses and poses accountability challenges. Existing monitoring mechanisms are not capturing the complexity of the projects, thereby exacerbating accountability issues.

The requirements for large-size consortia of CSOs and LAs has not had the desired effect of amplifying the results of CfP-funded actions. Instead, there has been evidence that the size has led to effectiveness and efficiency losses; this has been fed back to the DEVCO by various DEAR stakeholders over the years. Projects have taken considerable time before they could start to operate, due to the significant amount of coordination needed among multiple partners. The lead implementing organisations are also faced with considerable burdens resulting from their responsibility for large amounts of funds and the correct use for which has to be ascertained across organisations with a wide geographic spread and where activities and spending cannot be overseen on a day-to-day basis.

DEAR-funded actions were covered by the ROM monitoring mechanism, which is not appropriate for projects involving large CSO-LA consortia. At present, ROM considers only a small number of consortium partners in the monitoring exercises, thus never achieving the full picture of any one project. Resource constraints in DEVCO mean that there was not always a possibility of close scrutiny of the projects.

These conclusions have a number of far-reaching implications. Overall, it is important to stress that the strategic approach at programmatic level is well founded and was developed through a highly participatory approach and updated and confirmed through ongoing interaction with the Policy Forum

for Development. Nevertheless, the conclusions point to a need to make more use of political economy analysis, which was much improved over 2014-2019 and led to structured dialogue, so that CSO-LA is at the heart of a whole-of-EU, outcome-focused approach driven by critical needs and opportunities rather than by the availability of funding and a blanket, unqualified "need to support CSOs". Better use also needs to be made of available and more flexible modalities to delivery beyond what can be obtained through short duration projects. This entails identifying and working with game-changing CSOs (that represent constituencies and have good or improvable governance and financial sustainability prospects or a mission that does not depend on that) and where relevant supporting their strategic plans and strengthening them from within. This also implies more attention to supporting interventions that are likely to be transformative or contribute to transformation either by being linked to wider processes or because they are genuinely catalytic. Accountability should be less focussed on disbursement and more on the selection of transformative partnerships and interventions. As civil society cannot operate entirely in isolation of local authorities there also needs to be focus on strengthening local authority associations.

These strategic points point to the following recommendations:

1. Strengthen the programme through enhancing complementarity with other EU and member state instruments and processes and focussing on interventions that are catalytic.
2. Strengthen country level support to associations of local authorities under the new programme.
3. Continue to tailor the programme at country level through the roadmap and enhanced strategic engagement.
4. Consider a general introduction of LA road maps or equivalent analysis to underpin EU decentralisation support and to support empowerment and mainstreaming of local authorities in all relevant EU financed actions.
5. Ensure service delivery that pilots innovative approaches and has wider transformative impact.
6. Expand capacity development across all five dimensions defined by the programme (aiming among others to increase the involvement of local CSOs), and set up simplified but systematic monitoring.
7. 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.
8. Enhance results framework and reporting especially at programme and country level.
9. Strengthen the DEAR programme by developing a theory of change.
10. Develop a results and monitoring framework for the DEAR programme.
11. Ensure that programming decisions are reflective of stakeholder feedback and that they are transparent.

The recommendations imply action by the EC/DEVCO, the EUDs and also CSOs/LAs, after each measure the relevant actors are noted in square brackets. In many cases collaborative efforts across the actors would bring the best results.

Recommendation #1 – Strengthen the programme through enhancing complementarity with other EU and member state instruments and processes and focusing 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. The programme had the potential to encourage

sustainable innovation and agenda setting led by civil society (and also by local authorities). This could be through pilot projects and small-scale strategic support that catalyses change in addition to wider government or multi-donor programme. An example from the programme is the building up and piloting of new more effective advocacy practice, which can then be applied continuously or the development of platforms that are able in turn to reach many members. A concrete example is referenced in this document in the executive summary and under section 2.3 in Myanmar. Another example is enhancement of the function of civil society to provide oversight on government expenditure particularly where budget support is provided (a concrete example of where this has been practiced is the IBP project)[6].
This recommendation is linked to conclusions #1, 2 and 6.

This recommendation goes beyond the programme itself and is potentially relevant for both the future CSO programme and LA interventions. It 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]
- 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]

Recommendation #2 Strengthen country level support to associations of local authorities under the new programme
Rationale: Both when the context was favourable and difficult, the CSO-LA Programme added value by supporting local authorities through associations of local authorities, based on solid analysis and dialogue. Future support to national associations of local authorities will continue to rely on country-level support as regional support through the framework partnership agreements can only complement, not substitute country level support. Moreover, association of LA representatives interviewed by the evaluation suggested that there is an untapped potential for more synergy between support to regional LA advocacy and capacity support to national associations of local authorities. Regional advocacy was not strong, and elected association of LA representatives needed more sustained support across election terms to strengthen regional advocacy. For this and other reasons it is found relevant that the future CSO programme is open to associations of local authorities.
This recommendation is linked to conclusions #2, 4 and 5.

[6] DCI-CSO/LA / 2019 / 408-872

This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- Where the associations of local authorities are credible partners and can contribute to change, develop mechanisms at country level to support their role and mandate as advocacy bodies, service providers and best practise disseminators. The support should carefully avoid distorting accountability links between associations of local authorities and association members and be based on the association's own business plans. Where needed, it should include support to core operational capacity (knowledge management, communication, budget and accounting etc.), including sufficient capacity to manage EU funds. [EC/DEVCO, EUDs, ALAs]
- Future FPA-ALA support to regional advocacy should include support to regional or sub-regional CEO-networks for national associations of local authorities. [EC/DEVCO, EUDs, ALAs]

Recommendation #3 Continue to tailor the programme at country level through the roadmap 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. Whilst this recommendation is focussed on the future CSO programme it is also relevant for future LA actions in connection with recommendation #4.

This recommendation is linked to conclusions #1 and 3

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. An example of this has been done in Chad where a simple 3-point scenario response has been considered (situation gets better, gets worse, stays the same). [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]

Recommendation #4 Consider a general introduction of LA road maps or equivalent analysis to underpin EU decentralisation support and to support empowerment and mainstreaming of local authorities in all relevant EU financed actions.

Rationale: The LA component of the CSO-LA programme suffered from the absence of roadmaps and as a result, unlike for civil society, this component did not benefit from a structured national dialogue and strategy to guide the programme's approach, except in the few countries where LA roadmaps and strategies were developed. The learning from the CSO roadmaps – and the few LA roadmaps and strategies that were made eventually - indicate that roadmaps in general are valuable platforms for diagnostic analyses, structured dialogue and tailoring of new support that could benefit joint decentralisation programming more broadly. Elements of recommendation #2 are also relevant for future LA actions.

This recommendation is linked to conclusion #3

This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- Underpin bilateral decentralisation support with a roadmap based on a structured dialogue with central and local government and relevant development partners, including EU member states. The roadmap should take into account lessons learned from previous support and include a donor map to facilitate a coherent approach. [EC/DEVCO, EUDs]
- The roadmap should depending on the context consider 3 levels of engagement:
    - i) decentralisation policy; Where possible, the roadmap should be aligned to the government public sector-decentralisation reform programme and monitored through regular joint reviews, preferably coordinated by the relevant sector working group, if available. [EC/DEVCO, EUDs]
    - ii) LA empowerment. Where possible a capacity development strategy should be developed (some potential aspects could be inspired by the CSO 5-dimension approach used under the CSO-LA programme, for ALAs)
    - iii) mainstreaming of local authorities in all relevant EU actions e.g. waste water and roads and others.
- Where reform programmes are not present, roadmaps could focus on the strengthening of existing subnational frameworks. [EC/DEVCO, EUDs]

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

Rationale: Results in service delivery and local economic development, whether implemented by CSOs or in CSO-LA partnerships, remained in many cases localised and timebound, with limited impact beyond the targeted communities and LAs. In spite of high ambition levels, projects were implemented with limited scope and mostly failed to develop convincing pathways to sustain and upscale new approaches and ensure that they became part of public policy and practice. This meant that services became vulnerable once the projects were terminated and targeted LAs struggled to internalise and maintain whatever service improvements were achieved. Innovations and pilots were not in many cases adopted by local authorities in part because they were not co-developed or owned by LAs or ALAs who usually have the function of knowledge and information exchange. The feasibility of innovations and in particular what they cost and how costs can be recovered or met through budgets did not receive enough attention.

This recommendation is linked to conclusions #2, 4, 5 and 7.

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 and where relevant ALAs), and 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 (Box 2.9 outlines some of the constraints that held back greater engagement of local CSOs many of which are capacity related in the wider sense). Moreover, apart from very few countries there was little, or no monitoring and reporting of the capacity developed. It will also in many cases be relevant to expand the capacity of ALAs across the 5 dimensions.
This recommendation is linked to conclusion #5.

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/ ALAs]
- 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]

Recommendation #7 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. The EU and other donors have experience of providing different means of core (operational) support to individual CSOs, platforms and through FPAs that can be learnt from. The call for proposals can be adapted to reach beyond projects and support the core strategic plans of the CSOs based on a competitive process that examines the CSO track record, governance and quality/credibility of strategic plans. In some cases, such support might have to be preceded by providing initial support packages where needed especially for local CSOs (a task that the international CSOs are skilled in). More generally, the modalities and guidelines should be reviewed and the genuine frustration at EUD and CSO level better understood and responded to. Some delegations have made very efficient use of the internal allocation of funds for supporting the programme and also identified other sources of finance; this experience should be more widely shared so that roadmaps and dialogue with civil society can be active and enriched. Whilst this recommendation is focussed on the future CSO programme it is also relevant in part for future LA actions.
This recommendation is linked to conclusions #1 and 7

This recommendation goes beyond the programme itself and 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]

Recommendation #8 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 and for the DEAR component. 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 does not use theory of change and intervention logic tools.

This recommendation is linked to conclusion #8

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]

Recommendation #9 Strengthen the DEAR programme by developing a theory of change.

Rationale: The absence of a theory of change has led to a weakness in the results framework and a lack of a coherent and shared understanding of what the programme is meant to achieve.

This recommendation is linked to conclusions # 9 and 10

This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- Draw on intellectual resources produced by the 2010 DEAR Study as well as newer thinking as reflected in the analytical work done by the DEAR Support Team, CONCORD, and the project Frame. Voice. Report!, as well as GENE. [EC/DEVCO]
- The theory of change should clarify concepts at the core of DEAR and develop a coherent definition of the meaning of public awareness, public engagement, public mobilisation, and how these elements hang together. [EC/DEVCO]

Recommendation #10 Develop a results and monitoring framework for the DEAR programme.
Rationale: In part, as noted above, due to the absence of a theory of change but also other factors the results and monitoring frame is weak. This has been noted in earlier studies but not yet addressed.
This recommendation is linked to conclusions #9 and 10

This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- Based on a theory of change, develop standardised and verifiable indicators applicable across actions to account for results, and which provide guidance on what constitutes a successful DEAR project. [EC/DEVCO, CSOs/LAs]
- Draw on intellectual and analytical work conducted by DEAR stakeholders to inform this work. [EC/DEVCO, CSOs/LAs]
- Introduce more stringent requirements for how monitoring covers all partners in a CSO-LA consortium, and provide closer scrutiny of project reporting during project implementation. [EC/DEVCO]

Recommendation #11 Ensure that programming decisions are reflective of stakeholder feedback and that they are transparent.
Rationale: The weak results framework has with other factors contributed to accountability risks and a reduction in the opportunity for learning from experience. Once a theory of change and results framework are in place, it will be less difficult to ensure a higher level of accountability and learning.
This recommendation is linked to conclusion #11

This recommendation could be implemented through the following measures:

- Communicate why programming decisions are being taken, including those relating to the size of consortia; the thematic focus of the calls; as well as specific aspects of calls. [EC/DEVCO]
- In particular, provide feedback on such issues where stakeholders have provided substantiated feedback to DEVCO over the years. [EC/DEVCO, CSOs/LAs]

Annex 1 Main findings per EQ/JC

EQ 1	To what extent has the CSO-LA thematic programme responded to the evolving needs of the CSO and LAs to operate in their respective roles and areas of engagement?
Summary response	**Quality of evidence**
1. Overall, the programme was found relevant. It was country specific and responded to complex and changing contexts.	Strong
2. However, the ambition level of the programme was too high given the challenges faced by civil society and local authorities.	Strong
3. The consultation process, underlying roadmaps and monitoring improved during the programme period but varied considerably from country to country.	Strong
4. Consultation with LAs was generally weaker although there were some strong examples of good practice.	Strong
5. Engagement with both CSO and LA platforms and apex associations served to deepen the consultation beyond a focus on project management and delivery.	Strong
6. The call for proposals reflected policy priorities although projects tended to focus more on capacity and service delivery than on increasing the space for civil society and participation in democratic governance.	Strong
7. The programmes, the CfPs and the proposals that emerged reflected the consultation and the needs of CSOs but with a tendency to overlook CSO internal and governance shortcomings and the issue of financial sustainability.	Strong
8. There were relatively few calls for proposals aimed at LAs and in some countries none.	Strong
9. Gender, but not climate was increasingly mainstreamed and prioritised in the consultation, COS roadmaps and CfPs particularly following the second generation of CSO roadmaps.	Strong
JC 1.1	**Degree to which the EUDs have consulted CSOs/LAs to identify their needs and reflect them in their developing their priorities for response**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. The consultation process was served by clear guidance and templates that explained the purpose of the consultation and underlying roadmaps (i1.1.1/3)	Strong

2. The quality of consultation varied considerably between the countries but usually found it very difficult to reach beyond the capital (i1.1.1/4)	Indicative but not conclusive
3. In the sample countries the outcome of the consultation as expressed in CSO roadmaps and other documents were found, in varying degree, to be sound (i1.1.1)	Strong
4. The consultation and analysis tended to overlook CSO internal and governance shortcomings and little analysis or diagnosis was done on LA (i1.1.1)	Strong
5. The consultation strategies, road maps and other supportive analysis improved markedly in most countries during the programme period. (i1.1.1/2)	Strong
6. The practice of monitoring, updating and adjusting the consultation and other analysis was mixed and varied considerably between countries. (I1.1.2/4)	Strong
7. The earlier practice of concept notes was broader in that it also addressed the local authorities unlike the later roadmaps	Strong
8. Gender, but not climate was increasingly mainstreamed and prioritised in the consultation and roadmaps, particularly for the second generation of roadmaps. (i1.1.3)	Strong
JC 1.2	**Degree to which the CSO-LA thematic programme's call for proposals responded to the needs that arose from the consultations as in the roadmaps and/or other analysis**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. The CfPs were consistent with consultations but with the degree of specification varying considerably between countries. (1.2.1)	Strong
2. Although efforts were made to reach out to smaller CSOs the CfP process tended to favour the more established CSOs who were better able to respond. (i1.2.1/2)	Indicative but not conclusive
3. The CfPs and subsequent proposals did not systematically respond to the fundamental issue of longer-term financial sustainability either for CSOs or LAs. (i1.2.1/2)	Strong
4. The Call for proposals for LAs in most countries did not benefit from an in-depth contextual analysis. (i1.2.2)	Strong
5. The CfPs was a difficult instrument for the LAs especially the challenges facing LAs are often related to national processes beyond the reach of the CfPs. (i1.2.2)	Strong
6. Gender was largely absent or superficial in the CfPs under the first generation of roadmaps but substantially improved in the second generation after 2017 (i1.2.3)	Strong

7. Climate generally speaking does not feature in the call for proposals. (i1.2.3)	Strong
8. The CfPs reflected the policy priorities of the 2011 communication, the MIPS and MAAP but projects tended to focus more on capacity and service delivery than on increasing the space for civil society and participation in democratic governance. (i1.2.1.4)	Indicative but not conclusive

JC 1.2	**Degree to which the CSO-LA thematic programme's call for proposals responded to the needs that arose from the consultations as in the roadmaps and/or other analysis**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. CSOs appear to find that the recognition and policy and consultation mechanisms of the EU are good or very good whereas the project implementation mechanisms tend to perceived as negative. (i1.3.1)	Strong
2. The FPA for ALAs delivered project support but what the ALAs demanded was political support and partnership for promoting decentralisation. *(i1.3.3/4)*	Indicative but not conclusive
3. Where the space for civil society or local authorities was repressed or highly restrictive the dialogue was not always well founded on an appreciation of the political economy and setting of a realistic ambition that the programme could aim at. (i 1.3.1/2)	Indicative but not conclusive
4. In some countries the consultation and dialogue has reached a maturity where it would be constructive for it to evolve from a donor instrument to process driven by the civil society itself. (i 1.3.1-4)	Indicative but not conclusive

EQ2	To what extent is the CSO-LA thematic programme coherent in itself, and complementary with other EU and EU Member States development interventions that have similar objectives and what is its added value?
Summary response	**Quality of evidence**
1. Projects led to a deepening of relationships across CSOs, local authorities and central government.	More than satisfactory
2. However, the CSO-LA projects were not highly synergetic with each other, which limited their intended impact.	Strong
3. Even in countries where just "keeping the lights on" was the objective, there was a need to continuously scout for opportunities for more systemic effects.	More than satisfactory
4. The thematic programme had seven areas of added value compared to other EU programmes and processes, especially for CSOs.	More than satisfactory
5. As for the relationship between CSO-LA and other EU programmes and processes that support CSOs and LAs, it has been complementary in most countries visited.	Strong
6. The complementarity between CSO-LA and similar support from EU member states and other development partners has varied, ranging from excellent to non-existent.	Indicative, but not conclusive
JC 2.1	**Degree to which the interventions financed at national level are coherent with the interventions financed at regional /global level**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. There is some evidence of interactions between regional/global support and country-level support. (i2.1.1 and i2.1.2)	More than satisfactory

2. However, these interactions remain very limited and country-muticountry alliances could be increasingly important given shrinking civic space. (i2.1.1 and i2.1.2).	More than satisfactory
3. Increasing awareness of regional/global CSO-LA activities at country level and increasing experience sharing, networking, and alliance building at regional and global level, are within reach, and would be very beneficial, especially for countries with closing civic space (i2.1.1 and i2.1.2).	Indicative, but not conclusive
JC 2.2	**Degree to which the thematic programme is coherent with other EU programmes and instruments and EU MS supporting CSOs and LAs**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
With regards to internal EU coherence across EU programmes and processes supporting CSOs and LAs:	
1. The thematic programme was by and large coherent with other EU programmes and processes targeting CSOs and LAs. (i2.2.1 and i2.2.2).	Strong
2. The civil society roadmaps in 107 countries have contributed to internal coherence, although they have a potential to be much more problem-driven and focused on critical and/or promising issues and entry points. (i2.2.1).	Strong
3. The process for LAs was less advanced. (i2.2.2).	Indicative but not conclusive
With regards to complementarity with EU Member States supporting CSOs and LAs:	
4. Benefits of CSO roadmaps, in mapping who does what where and how and in setting joint objectives, were clear but the extent to which they were translated into operational terms was limited. (i2.2.1).	Indicative but not conclusive
5. Support to CSOs and LAs by Member states and other development partners remained overall scattered and project-based. (i2.2.1 and i2.2.2).	Indicative but not conclusive

JC 2.3	Degree to which the thematic programme has clear value added compared to other EU and EU MS support to CSOs and LAs
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. At the country, instrument and programme level, the thematic programme had seven areas of added value, especially for CSOs: absence of labelling; mobilisation in the absence of a bilateral framework or government approval; reach; duration and amount. For LAs, the main area of value-added was the dedicated effort to help CSOs and LAs work together. (i2.3.2).	More than satisfactory
2. The process in place at project level to ensure the value added of the thematic programme was focused on gender and inclusion. (i2.3.1).	More than satisfactory
3. If the roadmaps deliver on their promise (joint EU-MS diagnosis and approach to supporting civil society), then the value added of CSO-LA at country level can be quite significant. (i2.3.2).	More than satisfactory

EQ 3	**To what extend the CSO-LA Thematic Programme is using the best combination of approaches to maximize its support?**
Summary response	**Quality of evidence**
1. Programme level learning took place although monitoring was weak; there were results frameworks at country level but with variable levels of monitoring.	Strong
2. Project level monitoring was strong but tended to focus on accountability and not on performance or impact.	Strong
3. The roadmaps were a tool that allowed the programme to be tailored to country needs although they varied in quality and the degree to which they were used.	Strong
4. The funding delivery mechanisms available were not flexible enough in practice to support the strategic plans of civil society and local authority associations.	Strong
5. There was a disconnect between the FPAs and the consultation and funding activities of the EUDs.	Indicative but not conclusive
6. The CfP were well-designed and well managed but even with innovation and good management, they could not overcome the limits of the project approach	Strong
7. Most but not all CSOs found the EU procedures to be overly complex compared to other donors and a barrier for achieving results	Strong
8. The support facilities were in general under-utilised	Strong
JC 3.1	**The degree to which lessons learnt have been integrated into CSO-LA thematic programme**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. Programme indicators at activity and output level were defined in the MIPs but not used in practice. (i1.3.1.1/2)	Strong
2. At country level, the roadmaps generally set out a results framework but the level of monitoring varied. (i3.1.1/2)	Strong
3. Some countries such as Colombia, South Africa and Brazil had advanced systems of learning and monitoring. (i3.3.1/2)	Strong
4. At the project level the results frameworks were based on a log frame and in general monitoring and reporting was systematic. (i3.1.1/2)	Indicative but not conclusive
5. Accountability and adherence to procedures was emphasised more than learning or monitoring outcomes or impact (i3.1.1/2)	Strong

6. The programme learnt from earlier phases and a mid-term assessment led to substantial adjustments in the approach from 2018. (i3.1.3.)	Strong
JC 3.2	**The degree to which the implementation mechanisms were well designed and responded to the programme objectives**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. Direct negotiation worked well in many cases, but it was not as easy for the EU to apply it. (i3.2.1)	Strong
2. Use of the negotiated procedure enabled the programme to support the organization's own strategic plan. (i3.2.1)	Strong
3. The use of flexible procedures was possible but often difficult to use in practice and so demanding on the EUD that they tended not to be used as much as they could. (i3.2.1)	Indicative but not conclusive
4. FPAs are highly strategic and potentially respond to many of the weak points of earlier approaches but are not well coordinated with the delegations. (i3.2.2)	Indicative but not conclusive
5. The CfPs were well-managed and based on state of the art procedures but even with innovation and good management they could not overcome the limits of the project approach. (i3.2.3)	Strong
6. On-granting was generally favourable for involving smaller, local CSOs but also had drawbacks of its own. (i3.2.3)	Indicative but not conclusive
7. The rules and procedures were perceived by most local CSOs as a barrier although some, mostly well-established CSOs appreciated them. (i3.2.3)	Strong
8. The programme in general had a high degree of visibility although varying from country to country depending on the degree of restriction in the space for civil society and the actions of the EUD. (i3.2.4)	Indicative but not conclusive
JC 3.3	**The degree to which the outsourced facilities supported efficient and effective implementation of the programme**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. The level of monitoring and programmatic overview provided by the facilities varied but in general they seem to be under-utilised. (i3.3.1)	Strong
2. The roadmap facility seems to have been the one most used by the delegations. (i3.3.2)	Strong
3. The policy forum for development was instrumental in bringing DEVCO closer to views of the CSOs and LAs but delegations are generally not aware of it. (3.3.1/2)	Strong

EQ 4	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?
Summary response	**Quality of evidence**
1. The active political role of the EUD's as promoters, allies and advocates for civil society at country level remains important.	Strong
2. There was an asymmetry between strategic ambitions of the CSO-LA thematic programme as reflected in the two consecutive MAAPs, and the CSO roadmaps on the one hand, and the duration of the actions; financial resources available and implementing parameters of actions which constrained the prospects of higher level, sustained outcomes, in particular at country-level.	Strong
3. At country-level, funded actions were broadly in alignment with the MAAPs and the CSO roadmaps in pursuing policy change, but there are important variations	Strong
4. Substantial results in terms of policy change at country level were difficult to identify.	Strong
5. There is some evidence that actions funded under the CSO-LA have contributed to an improved enabling environment.	Strong
6. Support for ALAs at country level mostly targeted policy implementation and member support and did not lead to policy change, even where evidence-based advocacy was attempted	Strong
7. Regional and global actions funded under the CSO-LA thematic programme (through FPAs) targeted policy change clearer than projects funded under CfPs. However, the link between the policy-related actions funded at country level and the regional and global levels was weak.	Strong
8. At global level, there was evidence that FPAs had contributed to policy change.	Strong
9. The FPA-LAs also contributed to policy change at global level, but to a lesser extent at regional and local levels.	Strong
10. In some countries, the CSO-LA thematic programme focused on service delivery-type projects, while CSO projects addressing policy changes were funded through bilateral programmes.	Strong
JC 4.1	**Degree to which the CSO-LA thematic programme has funded interventions at country; regional/global; and EU levels which aimed at contributing to policy change as described in consecutive MAAPs for CSOs; LAs.**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**

1. There was an asymmetry between strategic ambitions of the CSO-LA thematic programme as reflected in the two consecutive MAAPs, and the Roadmaps on the one hand, and the duration of the actions funded at country, regional, and global levels on the other hand. (I 4.1.1)	Strong
2. There was also an asymmetry between the strategic ambitions of the MAAPs and the roadmaps, and the financial resources available to fund actions. (I 4.1.1)	Strong
3. The active political role of the EUD's as promoters, allies and advocates for civil society at country level remains important. (I 4.1.1)	Strong
4. Regional and global actions funded under the CSO-LA thematic programme (through FPAs) targeted policy change clearer than projects funded under CfPs. (I 4.1.1 and 4.1.2)	Strong
5. The link between the policy-related actions funded at country level and the regional and global levels is weak. (I 4.1.1)	Strong
6. For ALAs, there is anecdotal evidence that existing global formats are known, but that they are not necessarily suitable for ALAs. (I 4.1.2)	Strong
7. CfPs at country level were aligned, although to varying extent, with programme objectives in terms of contributing to policy change - as described in consecutive MAAPs for CSOs. (I 4.1.1)	Strong
8. In some countries, the CSO-LA thematic programme focused on service delivery-type projects, while CSO projects addressing policy changes were funded through bilateral programmes. (I 4.1.1)	Strong
9. Although it filled gaps, the strategic choice and comparative value of the programme for engaging in certain policy areas was not always clear, at least under the first generation of roadmaps. (I 4.1.1)	Strong
10. In many cases, higher level policy contributions and the mobilisation of wider EU policy and political support were made using direct negotiation rather than CfPs. (I 4.1.1)	Strong
11. While many projects under the CSO-LA are service delivery type projects, in reality, many of these projects contribute to policy changes (implementation, improvement of policy practice). (I 4.1.1)	Strong
12. CfPs aimed for ALA advocacy do not entail clear pathways for policy change. (I 4.1.1)	Strong
13. FPA-LA policy advocacy support clearly aimed at local, national, regional and global levels in accordance with MAAP objectives. (I 4.1.2)	Strong

JC 4.2	Degree to which interventions funded through the CSO-LA thematic programme can demonstrate results on contributing to specific and overall policy-related changes at country; and regional/global levels.
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. The asymmetry between ambition on the one hand, and the practical implementation, on the other hand, of the CSO-LA, mean that substantial results at policy level are difficult to identify. (I 4.2.1)	Strong
2. There is some evidence that actions funded under the CSO-LA have contributed to an improved enabling environment. (I 4.2.1)	Strong
3. The CfP projects at country-level have produced some results in terms of policy implementation, policy change, and political participation at local level. (I 4.2.1)	Strong
4. Where CSO projects have worked with LAs, relationships with the technical staff of local government can survive the change of the political leaders at that level in the respective locations. (I 4.2.1)	Strong
5. While service delivery type projects produced some results on policy implementation and improvement, these results were often highly localised, and did not produce results at national level. (I 4.2.1)	Strong
6. Service delivery type projects strengthened the position of the CSOs vis-à-vis the local authorities (I 4.2.1)	Strong
7. There has been some evidence on results to achieve national level policy changes, but these were achieved by projects that had been negotiated directly. (I 4.2.1)	Strong
8. At global levels, policy changes in terms of policy agenda shaping/setting have been achieved by organisations that have been funded through the FPA instrument. (I 4.2.1)	More than satisfactory
9. The FPAs achieved some tangible results in policy change at global, regional and national levels, but faced challenges of recognition and gaining influence at all levels. (I 4.2.2)	Strong
10. CfP projects for ALAs faced similar challenges and tangible results on policy changes are not evident. Such efforts are often assumed to be extended actions of ALA capacity development support to their members. (I 4.2.2)	More than satisfactory
11. When advocacy for policy change is taken up, it is no apparent if such efforts are followed through, and which factors underpinned or impeded successful advocacy efforts at national levels. (I 4.2.2)	More than satisfactory

EQ5	To what extent and how has the CSO-LA Thematic Programme contributed to the empowerment of CSOs and LAs as development actors?
Summary response	**Quality of evidence**
1. Capacity development primarily responded to project-level needs rather than addressing strategic concerns for civil society. Capacity development of LAs became more strategic compared to previous programme cycles. However, actor-based approaches, limited funding and scope struggled to address fundamental flaws in local government frameworks found in most contexts.	More than satisfactory
2. There is evidence that CSO project management, financial management, and technical capacities have improved, but internal governance remained an issue.	More than satisfactory
3. Capacity development efforts under CSO-LA were most impactful and value for money when the decentralisation context was conducive, and when capacity development brought different CSOs together.	More than satisfactory
4. When there was a shrinking civic space, CSO-LA could help CSOs and human rights defenders better identify possible medium-term scenarios, analyse and manage risks, and prepare contingency plans.	More than satisfactory
5. Regional and global FPAs had success in favouring multicountry networking and collective action but they had very limited interaction with country-level CSO-LA projects, many of which would however benefit from multicountry learning.	More than satisfactory
JC 5.1	**Degree to which the thematic programme increased CSOs capacities**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. Capacity development of CSOs although based on a diagnosis of their needs and strengths only rarely reflected on their role. (i5.1.1).	Indicative but not conclusive
2. In addition, there was no process in place to check if support to CSOs was inadvertently doing harm, in its overall approach and/or its modalities. (i5.1.1).	Indicative but not conclusive
3. The thematic programme built CSOs' financial and operational capacity, but did not focus much on internal governance. (i5.1.2).	More than satisfactory
4. To some extent, CSO-LA increased CSOs' technical capacity to implement their agenda, particularly when the CSO ecosystem is healthy (i5.1.3).	More than satisfactory

5. The thematic programme did not systematically enhance CSOs' capacity for structured peer learning, awareness raising and collective action. (i5.1.4).	More than satisfactory
JC 5.2 **Degree to which the thematic programme increased LAs capacities as actors of enhanced local governance**	
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. Projects achieved tangible results in targeted LAs, including in PFM, leadership, planning, budgeting, tax collection, and communication. (I-5.2.1)	Strong
2. However, most project results were localised and did not sufficiently consider sustainability beyond the short project duration. (I-5.2.1)	Strong
3. Implementation through international ALAs and CSOs in cooperation with national ALAs and/or LAs to some extend mitigated 'project islands' and linked results with advocacy and broader learnings. (I-5.2.1)	Strong
4. Where ALAs were supported, either directly or as implementers of LA projects, some capacity was developed, although long term sustainability remains an issue. (I-5.2.2)	More than satisfactory
5. FPA-MEM documented tangible results in international ALA capacity development which resulted in collective international actions and in general also strengthened international ALA operational capacity and led to improved procedures. There is little evidence on national ALA support effectiveness. (I-5.2.2)	Strong
6. The CSO-LA programme does not by default have a programme governing board at national level. This hampers project learning and upscale. (I-5.2.3)	More than satisfactory
JC 5.3 **Degree to which the thematic programme strengthened LAs as welfare providers and promoters of inclusive and sustainable growth at local level**	
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. The programme achieved some results in LA service provision, local economic growth and improved livelihoods, but there is limited evidence of sustainability and impact of this support and how the issue of scalability has been approached. (I-5.3.1-5.1.4)	Strong
2. The support made most progress in countries, when LA service provision was underpinned by a favourable decentralisation context, adaptation to local contexts through LA strategies and/or when projects were co-implemented as joint CSO-(A)LA projects. (I-5.3.1-5.1.4)	Strong
3. ALA implemented projects did not focus much on policy advocacy, even if they contain elements for more long-term evidence-based advocacy (I-5.3.6)	Strong

EQ 6	To what extent and how has the CSO-LA Thematic Programme helped to achieve transparency and accountability and overall improved democratic governance?
Summary response	**Quality of evidence**
1. The roadmap as a process was an important means of facilitating structured dialogue on how to strengthen CSOs as actors of governance.	Strong
2. While the roadmap and other processes were important, the follow-up and further impetus beyond individual projects in the sample countries was uneven at best.	Strong
3. The pursuit of improved governance as an explicit and realistic project objective depended on minimal political conditions being in place for CSOs to cooperate with local authorities as well as CSO readiness to cooperate.	Strong
4. Actions funded at country-level aimed at contributing to participatory processes; transparency; and accountability, but this was uneven across sample countries.	Strong
5. Some, but not all, CfPs included objectives on the enabling environment for CSOs, but the targeting was neither specific nor detailed.	Strong
6. At regional and global levels, the FPA-CSOs and direct contracts clearly funded actions that aimed at strengthening CSOs participation and recognition in global and regional policy processes and platforms, but uptake and results were uneven.	Strong
7. The FPA-LAs contributed to some recognition of ALAs in regional and global policy processes, and achieved most results in policy processes when linked to the global process for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.	Strong
8. In some countries, the CSO-LA has made a contribution to an improved enabling environment for CSOs.	Strong
9. Overall, aggregate results on improved democratic governance are difficult to identify at country, regional, and global levels.	Strong
10. The service delivery aspect of projects was a key leverage and entry point for the dialogue with the governments, but there was a risk that this dialogue lasts only as long as the projects “offer” services.	Strong
JC 6.1	**Degree to which the CSO-LA thematic programme has funded interventions at country; regional/global; and EU levels which clearly aimed at contributing to the improvement of democratic governance through inclusive policy making, as described in consecutive MAAPs for the CSO-LA.**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**

1. Governance is at the very core of the CSO-LA thematic programme, and the roadmap process was an important way of facilitating structured dialogue between the EUD, EU MS, and a wide range of civil society organisations at country level. (I 6.1.1)	Strong
2. While the roadmap drafting process was important, the follow-up in the sample countries was uneven at best—this in itself created somewhat of an accountability dilemma. (I 6.1.1)	Strong
3. Actions funded included projects aimed at contributing to participatory processes; transparency; and accountability, but this was uneven across sample countries. (I 6.1.1)	Strong
4. Some, but not all, CfPs included objectives on the enabling environment for CSOs, but the targeting was neither specific nor detailed, and questions remain about a common understanding of "enabling environment". 5. (I 6.1.1)	Strong
6. At regional and global levels, the FPAs and direct contracts clearly funded actions that aimed at strengthening CSOs participation in global and regional policy processes and platforms. (I 6.1.1)	Strong
7. The pursuit of improved governance as an explicit and realistic project objective depends on minimal political conditions being in place for CSOs to cooperate with local authorities; in some contexts, the structured pursuit of governance outcomes is unrealistic, and thus, results are incidental. (I 6.1.1)	Strong
8. Often, projects tended to focus on policy implementation/improvement of policy practice (see also EQ4) rather than the upstream issue of accountability of local and national government, although there are variations. (I 6.1.1)	Strong
9. Conceptually, there was not always a clear distinction between human rights and democratic governance. (I 6.2.1)	Strong
10. At implementation level, there was often a nexus between service delivery and human rights. (I 6.2.1)	Strong

JC 6.2	**Degree to which interventions funded through the CSO-LA thematic programme can demonstrate results on democratic governance including transparency and accountability and the overall enabling environment for CSOs, at country; and regional/global levels.**

Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. While projects have achieved results on governance at the local level, these were not often properly recorded or measured, and are frequently inadvertent results, rather than the outcome of deliberate planning, agenda setting and pursuit. (I 6.2.1)	Strong
2. In some countries, the CSO-LA has made a contribution to an improved enabling environment for CSOs. (I 6.2.1)	Strong

3. The service delivery aspect of projects was a key leverage and entry point for the dialogue with the governments. (I 6.2.1)	Strong
4. While the service delivery aspect is an entry point for CSOs to participate in dialogue with the authorities, it can also create perverse incentives/motivations, and might not lead to lasting governance outcomes. (I 6.2.2)	Strong
5. In countries where CSO projects at the local level have sought to increase the local authorities' capacities to engage in participatory forms of governance, it was not always certain whether the capacity built was sufficient. (I 6.2.2)	Strong
6. Legitimacy and CSO internal governance issues can be hindrances on influencing democratic governance. (I 6.2.1)	Strong
7. Coordination is a challenge. (I 6.2.1)	Strong
8. There have been some results on improving democratic governance at the national level (I 6.2.2)	Strong
9. However, the link between local and national levels is generally weak, which is limiting the results to the locations of the projects, without achieving improved governance at a higher level. (I 6.2.2)	Strong
10. There has been some evidence of participatory processes at the regional level. (I 6.2.2)	Strong
11. At global level, FPAs have facilitated the participation of member CSOs in international arenas. (I 6.2.2)	Strong
12. In some contexts, the structured pursuit of governance outcomes was unrealistic, and thus, results were incidental. (I 6.2.2)	Strong
JC 6.3	**Degree to which the CSO-LA thematic programme is improving democratic governance, including transparency and accountability, for LAs and ALAs**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. Democratic governance, accountability and transparency was consistently incorporated into country CfPs and subsequent action awards, but results were localised and difficult to sustain (I-6.3.1/6.3.2)	Strong
2. The FPA-LAs contributed to some recognition of ALAs in regional and global policy processes, and achieved most results in policy processes when linked to the global process for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (I-6.3.3).	Strong
3. Results from FPA support to national policy processes were limited, with the ongoing work of UCLG-A towards fiscal decentralisation in Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, and Niger being the most visible and progressed efforts. (I-6.3.3).	Strong

EQ 7	**To what extent and how has the programme promoted local development through a territorial approach?**
Summary response	**Quality of evidence**
1. There is evidence of development outcomes and multi-actor partnerships from several countries, but results remained localised and difficult to unsustain beyond project durations	Strong
2. There is some evidence of programme support to development plans, participation and social cohesion, but they rarely led to broader development outcomes.	More than satisfactory
3. There is limited evidence of testing and piloting on behalf of a broader territorial approach and how CSO-LA Programme understood such approaches. However, the GLOserve Project in Northern Uganda was an outlier, testing for national learning and scalability	More than satisfactory
4. There was rarely a programme governance mechanism at the national level to promote scalability and it proved difficult to make strong links to potential mechanisms	Strong
JC 7.1	**The degree to which the sample project grants awarded targeted territorial development and fostered coordination and synergies of CSOs and LAs**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. CfPs in general used one or more of the options for targeting local development as outlined in the TALD guidance (I-7.1.1)	Strong
2. There is limited evidence that CfPs linked local development support to pilot testing within a larger decentralisation, local governance and local development (DLGLD) framework 3. (I-7.1.1)	Strong
4. Local development projects established local partnerships and coordination between actors. However, mechanisms to sustain such partnerships beyond project duration and upscale them beyond the project territory was rarely addressed. (I-7.1.3)	Strong
JC 7.2	**The degree there is evidence that the programme increased cooperation in the production of development outcomes at the territorial level**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. There was evidence of development outcomes from several countries, but development outcomes are quite localised and vulnerable when the projects stop (I-7.2.1)	Strong
2. Where national authorities participated in the projects, it was mostly for backstopping, whilst there is limited evidence of broader learning linked to the project, both in design and in practice (I-7.2.1)	Strong
3. Issues of sustainability and scalability was also inhibited by the small funding envelope and short project durations, which did not allow for more comprehensive project designs linking to broader development frameworks. (I-7.2.1)	Strong

JC 7.3	The degree there is evidence that the programme tested and upscaled strategic and innovative local development plans, and initiatives on participation and social cohesion at the territorial level
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. There was limited evidence of testing and piloting on behalf of a territorial approach and how this approach was understood within the support rendered by the CSO-LA Programme (I-7.3.1)	More than satisfactory
2. There is no conclusive evidence of support to development plans, participation and social cohesion which lead to broader development outcomes as a result of local development support. (I-7.3.1/I-7.3.2)	More than satisfactory
3. The GLOserve Project in Uganda is a CSO-LA Programme outlier, demonstrating how to test and pilot a territorial approach. (I-7.3.2)	Strong

EQ 8	To what extent and how have CSOs and LAs proven to be effective actors to implement the EU DEAR strategy and achieve the EU DEAR objectives?

Summary response	Quality of evidence
1. CSOs and LAs are well placed to work on DEAR issues, but some underlying assumptions would benefit from critical examination.	More than satisfactory
2. Despite the absence of a theory of change, and a common results and monitoring framework that would provide a strategic approach to implementing the DEAR objectives, the DEAR programme worked through a highly complementary set of modalities.	More than satisfactory
3. The value-added of GENE and NSC in pursuing global education is being recognised by stakeholders.	More than satisfactory
4. The institutionalisation of Global Education into formal and non-formal education is an ongoing effort which depends on political contexts in member states.	More than satisfactory
5. The DEAR programme's emphasis on large CSO-LA consortia across multiple EU MS has positive effects, but can also be detrimental to efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the actions.	Strong
6. Whether CfP-funded actions were able to reach out to more EU citizens cannot be verified, and there are difficulties around the accountability for achievement of other results, too.	Strong
7. The Presidency Grants have, in their new form, amplified the effectiveness of grants provided to CSO coalitions in countries holding the EU presidencies.	More than satisfactory

JC 8.1	DEAR objectives are best pursued through CSOs and LAs because these actors are in a position that makes them uniquely placed to work on DEAR issues (compared to other actors).

Summary response (indicator)	Quality of evidence
1. CSOs and LAs are well placed to work on DEAR issues, but a theory of change for the DEAR sub-component was missing that could have been useful to provide a more stringent and explicit argument and rationale for their role. (8.1.1)	More than satisfactory
2. There is an implicit theory of change justifying CSOs and LAs as DEAR actors. (8.1.1)	More than satisfactory
3. The supporting evidence for the DEAR programme's implicit theory of change as regards CSOs and LAs as actors varied. (8.1.1)	More than satisfactory
4. The situation for EU 13 MS organisations is specific.	Strong

5. The commonality among DEAR actors is a shared set of values and beliefs, as presented in the DEAR objectives. (8.1.1)	More than satisfactory
6. Whether CSOs and LAs are better able to reach out to citizens because of who they are cannot be conclusively verified. (8.1.2)	Weak
7. There is considerable variety in the types of CSOs and LAs implementing DEAR CfP actions, resulting in different qualities of implementation. 8.1.2)	Weak
8. Where LAs are in the lead partner in the project, the role of CSOs in implementation was considerable. (8.1.1)	More than satisfactory
9. The partnership between LAs and CSOs led to greater access to policy and decision-makers. (8.1.2)	Weak
10. Fundamentally, questions about the quality of the engagement of CSOs and LAs through DEAR projects with citizens come back to a lack of a common results and monitoring framework. (8.1.2)	Weak
11. Differences among CSOs and LAs related to the extent to which they shared the key DEAR assertion that it is a lack of awareness that needs to be addressed among EU citizens in order to achieve a change in attitudes and practices. (8.1.1)	More than satisfactory
12. For established, professionalised NGOs, the DEAR programme allowed to pursue actions for which they had the skills and expertise, but not the funding, but which would not have been possible to be pursued by other actors. (8.1.1)	Strong
13. The DEAR programme is an important source of funding for many CSOs and this motivates participation in consortia. (8.1.1)	More than satisfactory
JC 8.2	**The way in which the programme operations, i.e. through consortia of multiple CSOs and LAs across the EU is amplifying its effectiveness.**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. The requirements in terms of the size of the consortia have an impact on the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of the DEAR funds. (I 8.2.1)	Strong
2. The existing monitoring mechanisms are not adequate for the size of the consortia. (I 8.2.1)	Strong
3. The DEAR programme has, through the DEAR support facility, contributed to building and consolidating a community of DEAR practitioners, and established a highly appreciated learning mechanism. (I 8.2.1)	Strong
JC 8.3	**Direct grants, "flanking" the CfP funded actions are complementing the actions implemented through CfPs and thus, amplify the effectiveness of the programme**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**

1. The elements of the DEAR programme were overall well balanced. (I 8.1.2 - 8.3.1)	More than satisfactory
2. The strategic grants provided to GENE and the Council of Europe's North-South Centre are increasing the effectiveness of other DEAR actions. (I - 8.3.1)	Strong
3. GENE has become recognised, by other DEAR stakeholders, as working strategically and complementing the other actions' bottom-up approach to the pursuit of DEAR objectives by a top-down approach. (I - 8.3.1)	Strong
4. The North-South Centre, too, is recognised by DEAR stakeholders as a strategic, complementary partner in institutionalising DEAR objectives. (I - 8.3.1)	More than satisfactory
5. The institutionalisation of Global Education into formal and non-formal education is an ongoing effort which depends on political contexts in member states. (I - 8.3.1)	More than satisfactory
6. The Presidency Grants have, in their new form, amplified the effectiveness of grants provided to CSO coalitions in countries holding the EU presidencies. (I - 8.3.2)	More than satisfactory

EQ 9	To what extent and how has the CSO-LA Thematic Programme helped to achieve EU DEAR objectives?

Summary response	Quality of evidence
1. The goals and implementation strategies of the projects funded through the CfP are in line with DEAR objectives on public awareness raising, citizens' mobilisation and active engagement.	Strong
2. There is some evidence from the sample that projects have increased EU citizens' mobilisation and active engagement of EU citizens, and that they have led to behavioural changes.	Indicative, but not conclusive
3. The reported results of some the projects' awareness raising activities cannot be verified.	Strong
4. Projects funded under the DEAR component have contributed to a better integration of development issues into formal and non-formal education in EU member states.	More than satisfactory
5. There are long-standing methodological challenges to evaluating DEAR projects and the DEAR programme as a whole.	Strong
6. A key question is how the EC is taking up recommendations and analytical input generated by the experience so far for the design and implementation of the DEAR programme and the CfPs.	Strong
7. A question that is not covered by this evaluation or by the 2018 DST Impact Assessment is that of efficiency aspects of the project, an opportunity has been missed to learn how to increase efficiency.	More than satisfactory

JC 9.1	Project funded under the DEAR component of the CSO-LA contributed to European citizen's critical reflection about development policy.

Summary response (indicator)	Quality of evidence
1. Projects awarded funding through the 2016 CfP comply with the objectives of the DEAR programme. (I 9.1.1)	Strong
2. The CfP objectives are so broad that fitting projects under the umbrella can be done relatively easily. (I 9.1.1)	Strong
3. There was a tendency for project applications to use the right "vocabulary" in the application process, but there was considerable variety in the implementation process. (I 9.1.1-I 9.1.2)	Strong
4. What projects report in terms of results and outcomes is not always verifiable. (I 9.1.2)	Strong

5. The accountability deficit is sometimes increased by the size of the project consortia, and by the fact that the ROM format is not able to cover all consortium partners. (I 9.1.2)	Strong
6. While efficiency, including value-for-money, has not been a specific vector of inquiry for this evaluation, it is worthwhile, in a future programme, to consider it. (not a specific indicator)	More than satisfactory
7. The DEAR programme is based on the premise that there is a need for awareness raising on development issues, and that there is a nexus between awareness raising and increased activism. (I 9.1.2)	Strong
8. What awareness raising is and how it is interpreted in projects differs considerably. (I 9.1.2)	Strong
9. There was also evidence of some conflation of "public awareness raising" with "outreach" activities, and there was sometimes a lack of follow up on the targets. (I 9.1.2)	Strong
10. It is likely that the projects in the sample have contributed to an increase in public awareness about development issues in Europe. (I 9.1.2)	Strong
JC 9.2	**Projects funded under the DEAR component of the CSO-LA have increased EU citizens' mobilisation and active engagement in local and global actions, including advocacy for policy change, or changes in consumption behaviour.**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**
1. The goals and implementation strategies of the projects funded through the CfP are in line with DEAR objectives on citizens' mobilisation and active engagement. (I-9.2.1)	Strong
2. There is some evidence from the sample that projects have increased EU citizens' mobilisation and active engagement of EU citizens. (I-9.2.2)	Indicative, but not conclusive
3. Projects have made the link between awareness raising and other project activities and advocacy for policy change at the European level. (I-9.2.2)	Indicative, but not conclusive
4. The effectiveness of policy advocacy appears to depend to some extent on how established partners are at the EU level. (I-9.2.2)	Indicative, but not conclusive
5. There is some evidence of results on citizens' engagement. (I-9.2.2)	Indicative, but not conclusive
JC 9.3	**Projects funded under the DEAR component have contributed to a better integration of development issues into formal and non-formal education in EU MS.**
Summary response (indicator)	**Quality of evidence**

1. For the actions funded in the first half of the 2014-2020 programme period, the integration of development issues into formal and non-formal education in EU MS was done through CfPs as well as direct grants. (I-9.3.1)	More than satisfactory
2. CfP funded actions had different approaches to development education, reflecting a difference in the situation between the "old" EU MS and EU 13 MS. (I-9.3.1)	More than satisfactory

Annex 2 Portfolio analysis

This chapter aims at providing an overview of the programme during the period 2014-2019. The database constructed by DEVCO A5 serves further data analysis and, where relevant, was used to contribute to the analysis of the evaluation questions.

After a quick introduction on the approach followed, this chapter presents a general overview of the programme, and an analysis of the inventory.

3.1 Description of the approach taken in the inventory

The following Table 0.1 depicts the general approach to the mapping of the CSO-LA programme:

Table 0.1 Approach

Step	Description
1	Verification of projects • Years 2014-2018 (decision year) • Decisions and contracts • All countries
2	Analysis • Categorisation and selection

Step 1 The DEVCO A5 database consists of information of all contracts under the previous programme Non-state actors and local authorities (NSA-LA) (2007-2013) and the current CSO-LA programme (2014-2019). The first step of developing the inventory consisted of verifying the projects in the DEVCO A5 database. The projects were verified by cross-checking the projects in the A5 database with those listed in the evaluability assessment's list. Further, it was checked by samples from the CRIS (Common RELEX Information System) database.

Step 2 The DEVCO A5 database is already categorised by component (CSO, LA), countries/regions and various other types of categories. The evaluation team further sub-categorised the database where needed. After the verification and categorisation, the portfolio was analysed.

The scope of the inventory is all contracts under the CSO-LA programme for the period 2014-2019.

Limitations

There were a number of limitations or considerations that are relevant to bear in mind:

- Several projects are multi-country and hence they are not categorised per country. The multi-country projects are primarily granting under framework partnership agreements and DEAR projects, as well as support measures.
- Although a sound and systematic approach was applied, the inventory is for some parts dependent on an assessment (based on contract documents or on the internet)

made by DEVCO A5, specifically for target group, type of activity, theme and type of actor.

- The analysis is based on decision years 2014-2019. Most of the 2014 decisions were contracted in 2015 and onwards. Hence, there is no long-track record in the portfolio. The last year under this scope is 2019. During this year all contracts issued were from decisions in 2018.

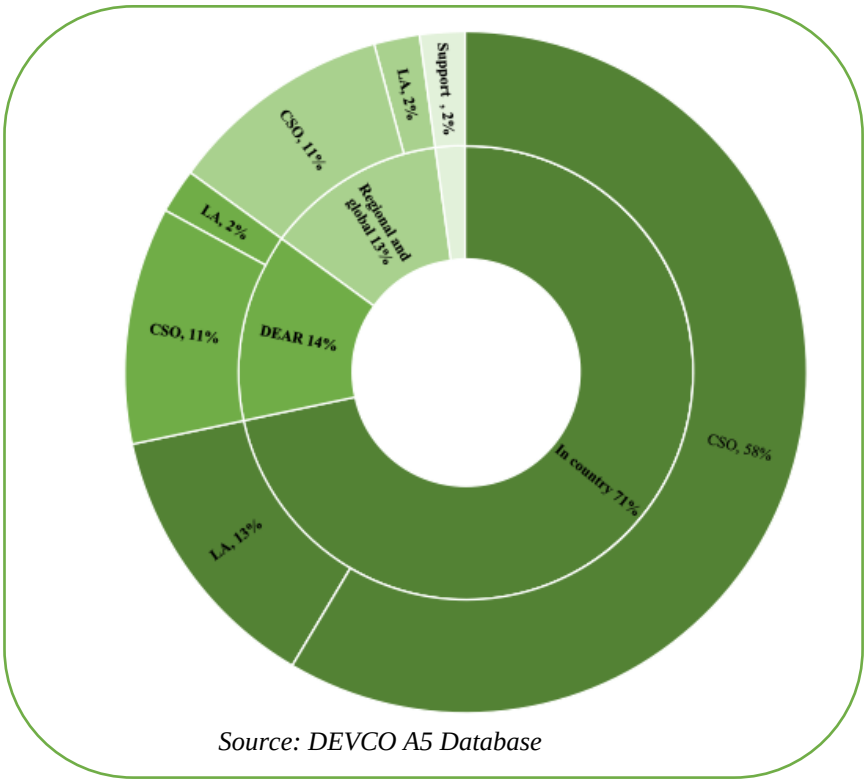
3.2 General Overview for the period 2014-2019

The three components of the MIPs (2014-2020 and 2018-2020) are CSO, LA and DEAR. Since a DEVCO reorganisation in 2017, this is how the institutional set-up is structured at the time of the evaluation: DEVCO A5 "Civil Society Organisations and Foundations" is responsible for CSOs and the management of the Programme; C5 "Cities, Local Authorities, Digitalisation, Infrastructures" for LA and B1 "Gender Equality, Human Rights and Democratic Governance" for DEAR. This broadly matches the structure of the Evaluation Questions (EQs). Directorate Generale (DG) NEAR is responsible for the neighbourhood region. Therefore, the main part of the analysis is structured looking at CSO, LA and DEAR. CSO and LA projects are implemented worldwide at country level and at global and regional level (through the grants under framework partnership agreements). DEAR is implemented by CSOs or LAs in the European Union (but Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) countries can participate in DEAR consortia).

Figure 0.1 shows the distribution of contracted funds under the MIP 2014-2017 objectives. Over the period 2014-2019, 71% of the contracted funds were allocated to CSOs and LAs at country level (objective 1). Approximately 13% were allocated to reinforcing regional and global CSO networks and associations of LAs (objective II), and 14% of the allocated funds were spent on DEAR activities (objective III). The remaining 2% were used on support measures. These figures broadly match with the indicative allocations for the 2014-2020 programme.[7] The CSO component is the largest for all three objectives as compared to LA and DEAR. It is not possible to examine the allocation under the new objectives in the MIP 2018-2020, as there are lesser signed contracts, although for CSO framework partnership agreements there has been a significant amount committed in 2018.

[7] Multiannual Indicative Programme for the Thematic Programme "Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities" for the period 2014-2020 (15.7.2014 C(2014) 4865 final): https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/cso-la-mip-2014-2020_en.pdf

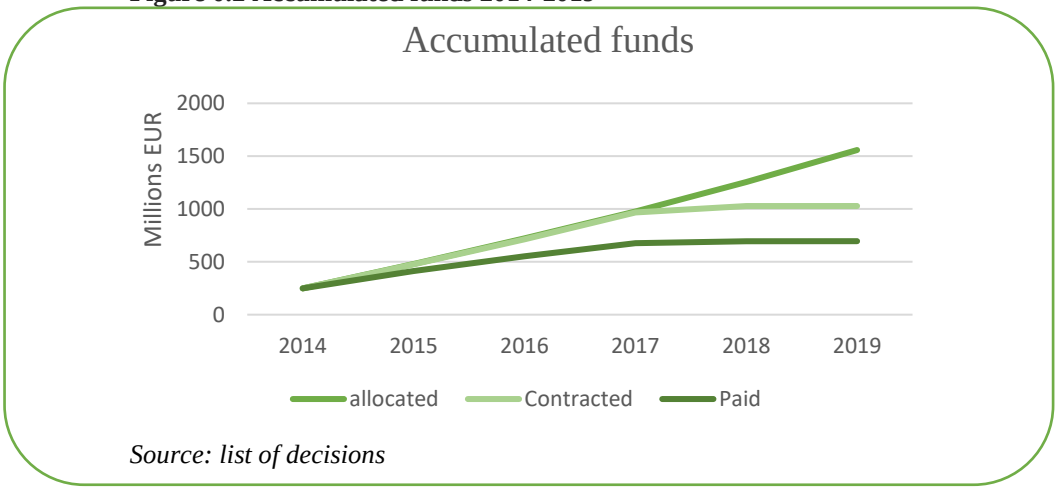
Figure 0.1 Contracted amount by priority (MIP 2014-2020) divided by LA and CSO. Based on decision year. 2014-2018.



Source: DEVCO A5 Database

Overall, the EU has contracted approximately Euro (EUR) 1 billion in support to the CSO-LA programme for the period 2014-2018.[8] Figure 0.2 shows the accumulated funds from 2014-2019, both allocated, contracted and paid amounts. Table 0.2 shows the contracted allocation across the three components. The amount for LA projects is significantly lower than that for CSO projects, as forecasted, though it has increased over the years. The low allocation in 2018 is due to the analysis being based on decision years, and where the majority of the 2018 decisions will be contracted only in late 2019.

Figure 0.2 Accumulated funds 2014-2019



Source: list of decisions

[8] Decision year 2014-2018

Table 0.2 Overall contracted amount (EUR) by decision year. Including support measures. Related to decisions in scope (2014-2018)

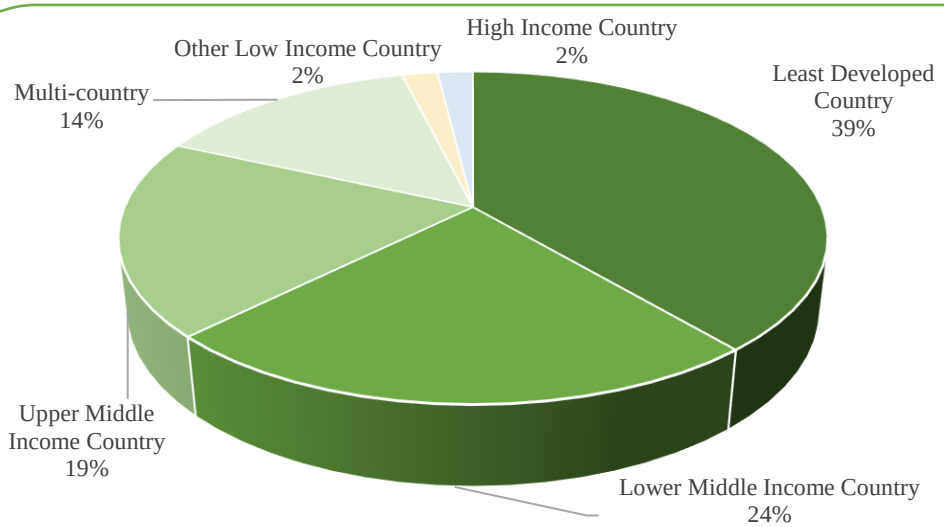
Year LA/CSO/DEAR	Contracted amount (EUR)	Number of contracts 2014-2018*
MIP 2014-2020		
2014	**244.050.299**	**361**
LA	23.828.760	32
CSO	187.763.775	317
DEAR	32.457.764	12
2015	**231.053.612**	**367**
LA	46.128.108	64
CSO	184.676.595	302
DEAR	248.909	1
2016	**236.312.140**	**318**
LA	55.788.667	79
CSO	154.571.028	227
DEAR	25.952.445	12
2017	**241.566.847**	**367**
LA	37.931.499	76
CSO	130.366.257	273
DEAR	73.269.091	18
MIP 2018-2020		
2018	**45.981.894**	**30**
CSO	44.189.922	29
DEAR	1.791.972	1
Total	**998.964.791**	**1443**

*Note that most decisions made in 2018 will be contracted in late 2019

Source: DEVCO B2 (now A5 and C5) Database

The contracted amount according to income status, Figure .3, shows that the Least Developed Countries have received 39% of the allocated funds, followed by the Lower-Middle Income Countries (24%) and Upper-Middle Income Countries projects (19%).

Figure 0.3 Contracted amount according to income status (DAC/OECD). 2014-2019. Without DEAR and without support measures.

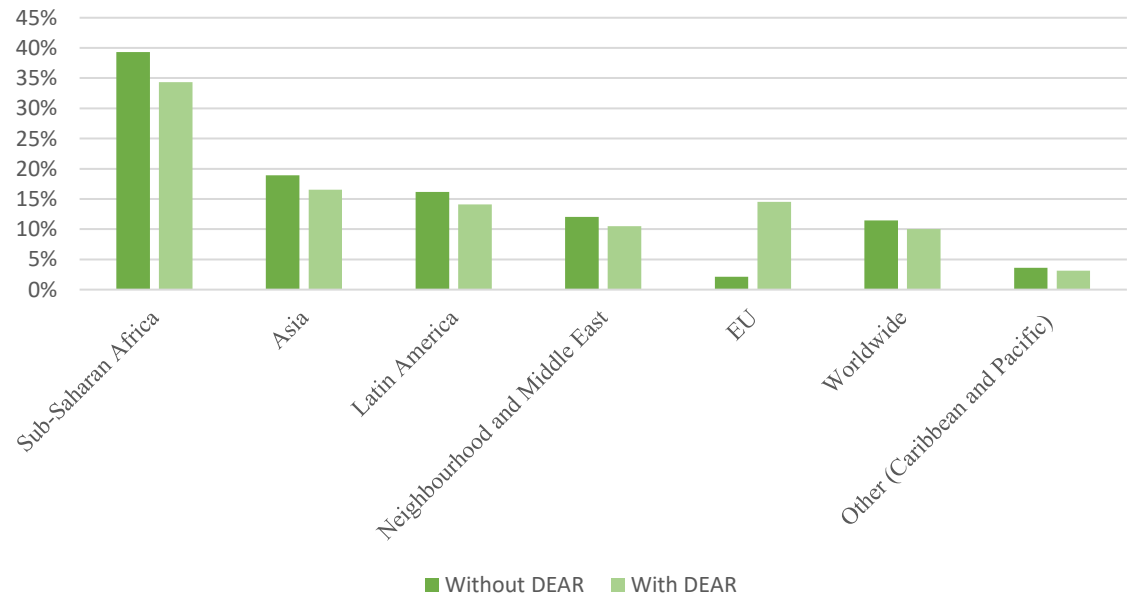


Source: DEVCO A5 Database / authors

3.3 Geographic allocation

The CSO-LA programme is implemented worldwide in 118 countries. The contracted amount of funds in the different regions is illustrated below in figure 2.4. The main recipient region is Sub-Saharan Africa, followed by South Asia and South America. The allocation for EU member states (MS) is significantly higher if DEAR is included, as DEAR projects are primarily implemented inside the EU. Multi-country projects are primarily under FPAs and support measures.

Figure 0.4 Total contracted amount by region with and without DEAR. 2014-2019.



Source: DEVCO A5 Database

Annex 3 Overview of the intervention logic

A 3.1 Objectives and impact

The overall strategy and objectives of the CSO-LA thematic programme are defined by the two Multi-Annual Indicative Programmes (MIPs): MIP 2014-2020 and M 2018-2020. These documents direct the CSO-LA Thematic Programme to contribute to:

- "strengthen civil society organisations and local authorities;
- improve governance and accountability through inclusive policy-making by empowering citizens and populations, through the voicing and structuring of their collective demands, to contribute to tackle injustice and inequality;
- enhance livelihood opportunities for populations to participate in and benefit from a just, inclusive and environmentally sustainable climate resilient low-carbon economic development that is tailored to territorial characteristics and needs, and trigger a change in the quality of citizens' life and wellbeing, ensuring a balance between socio-economic growth, equity and environmental quality and increasing the resilience of the most vulnerable;
- develop European citizens' awareness and critical understanding of complex development issues and global interdependence, and to support their active engagement with global attempts to eradicate poverty and promote justice, human rights and democracy, social responsibility, gender equality, and sustainable development strategies in partner countries."[9]

As outlined in the ToR, there are 5 main outcomes across the programme as whole:

- Capacity – one of the major outcomes of the support, the capacity of the CSOs and LAs and of their respective associations is increased and used in practice in order to contribute to policy-making and policy implementation processes.
- Policies/institutional frameworks – as outcomes of the support, policies/institutional frameworks (mechanisms, capacity, knowledge sharing, public awareness) at local/national and regional levels are made more relevant, credible and inclusive, allowing the voicing and structuring of citizens' collective demands.
- Governance and accountability – as outcomes of the support, the incentive environment motivates LAs and CSOs to strive towards increased accountability contributing to better governance.
- Service delivery (social and economic) – as outcomes of the support, improved interactions lead to improved services/opportunities for vulnerable groups and, when public failures are demonstrated, the programme will provide direct services to these groups.
- Citizens' awareness – as outcomes of the support, increased awareness of global interdependencies and the role of EU cooperation.

[9] MIP 2014-2020

A3.2 CSO and LAs components

An overview of the theory of change for the CSOs and LA components is given in Figure 3.1. This is based on the normative documents and builds on analysis provided in the evaluability assessment and the ToR and is further informed by discussions with DEVCO and others.

Inputs and interventions leading to outputs

The CSO-LA thematic programme provides a combination of funding, technical assistance and policy dialogue. These inputs are channelled via a number of mechanisms and delivery paths. The principal ones are described below:

Policy dialogue is held at country, regional and global levels to promote and empower civil society and local authorities. At country level, CSO roadmaps were drawn up to deepen the understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing civil society, and to enable a close coordination and harmonisation with other support initiatives, most notably those of member states. More recently, a similar but non-compulsory exercise was carried out in four countries for LA roadmaps. Based on this and other analysis, the agenda of policy dialogue was set and calls for proposals were drawn up. At the same time, in recognition of the need to reach a more inclusive set of actors, to strengthen CSOs and LAs through their own associations and to benefit from high capacity consortiums and associations, there were calls for FPAs. In total, 25 have been agreed for CSOs and 5 for LAs. To support this complex programme, five facilities were also funded that promote and ensure dialogue, such as the Policy Forum for Development, as well as facilities that were set up to assist in monitoring and operational support.

Through the combination of this support and the grants that were guided by the CfP, a number of outputs are expected to be reached. These can be seen as falling into 3 groups:

- Policy contribution through mechanisms of interaction, capacities of civil society and LAs, experience exchange through networks and associations, and public awareness;
- Increased governance and accountability;
- Improved services through pilot actions, multi-actor partnerships and use of innovative approaches.

The MIP 2014-2020 provides detailed lists of results expected under a set of objectives and sub-objectives which broadly speaking fall into these groups.

Outputs - to - intermediate outcomes - to- outcomes

The implicit theory of change, reconstructed here, is that if the outputs are reached and they are put into operation (i.e. made use of), then a number of important and far-reaching outcomes will be achieved, including:

- Policy environment - CSOs, LAs, CSOs networks and ALAs will contribute more effectively to policy-making and policy-implementation processes at different levels (local, regional, national and global, including at EU level). The collective demands of citizens and populations will be better voiced and structured.
- Governance - Accountability and transparency of civil society and the public domain, including of Las, is increased.

- Services – the quality and access to social services is improved, and local development is scaled up

Outcomes to impacts

Over time, these outcomes will lead to intermediate impacts, including: integrative enabling environment, and increasing civic space; improved quality and effectiveness of more inclusive public policies (at local, national regional and global levels) with respect to populations' needs; public resources are used effectively and efficiently; and budgets are more reflective of people's needs and priorities. This, in turn, will lead to improved access to - and quality of - services for populations in large and vulnerable and marginalised groups in particular.

Finally, in the long term, the intended impact of a more inclusive and empowered society which enhances growth and the well-being of everyone in partner countries will be reached.

Assumptions and drivers

This chain of achievement from inputs to outputs to outcomes and impacts is dependent on a series of assumptions, and also influenced positively by drivers of change. These are complex factors, which, while largely external to the programme, the programme is dependent on. The ToR provide a comprehensive list, which is summarised below:

From activities to outputs

- Relevant LAs/ALAs and CSOs/CSO networks have enough capacities and policy space to properly respond to EU CfPs and when selected, to properly implement EU-funded projects.

From outputs to outcomes

- CSOs and LAs are willing to work together, network and share knowledge.
- Capacity constraints can be overcome through the capacity development measures available through the programme.
- The enabling environment, even if far from perfect, is sufficient to provide space for the EUD, its partners and CSOs and LAs to improve it.

From outcomes to impact

- Vested interests can be managed and controlled so that they do not work against or prevent the attainment of intermediate impacts on the pathway towards longer-term impacts.
- Central government recognise and commit to the benefits of empowering civil society and local government.

Figure A0.1 CSO and LA components. Source: Evaluation team.

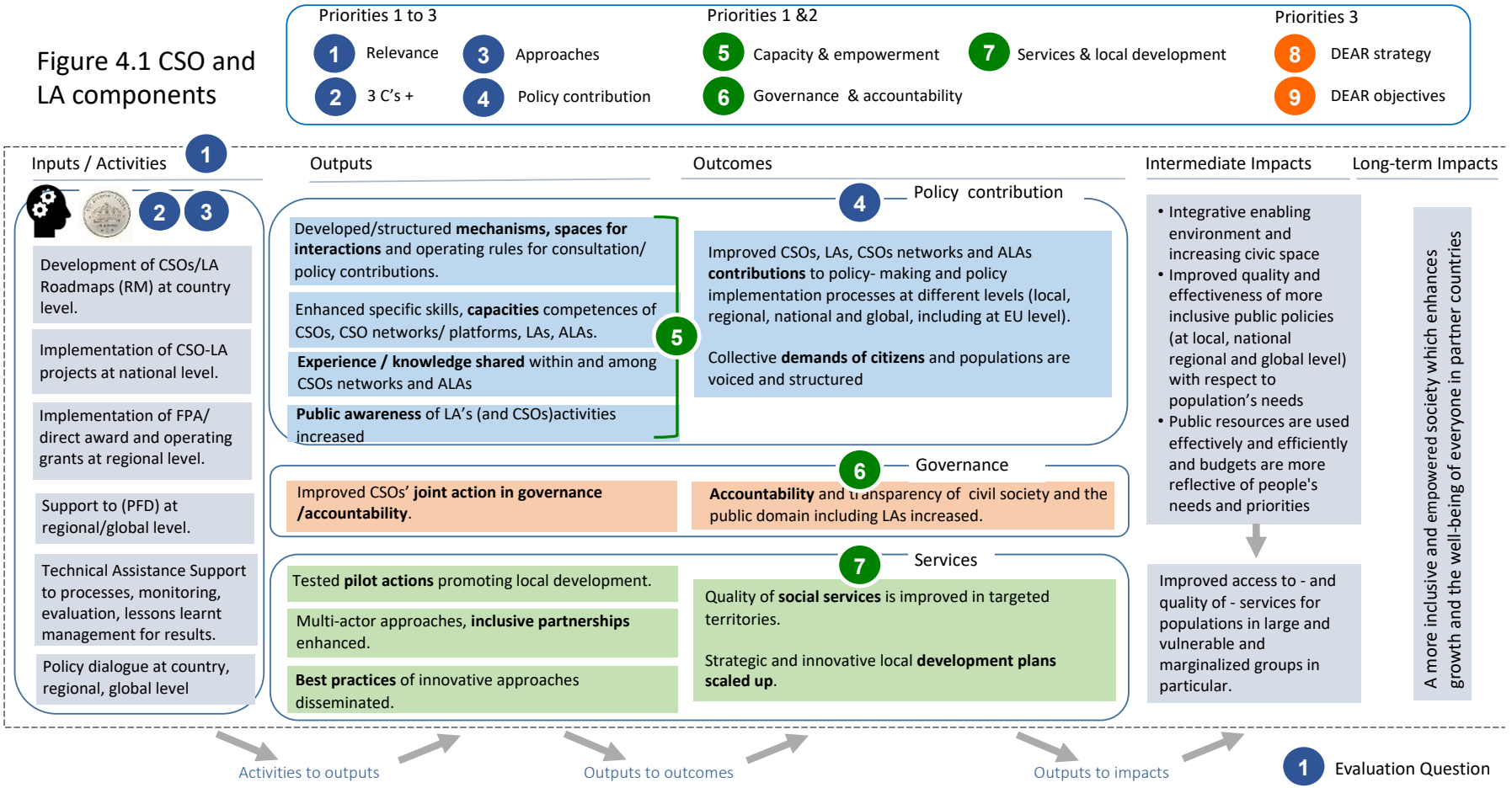
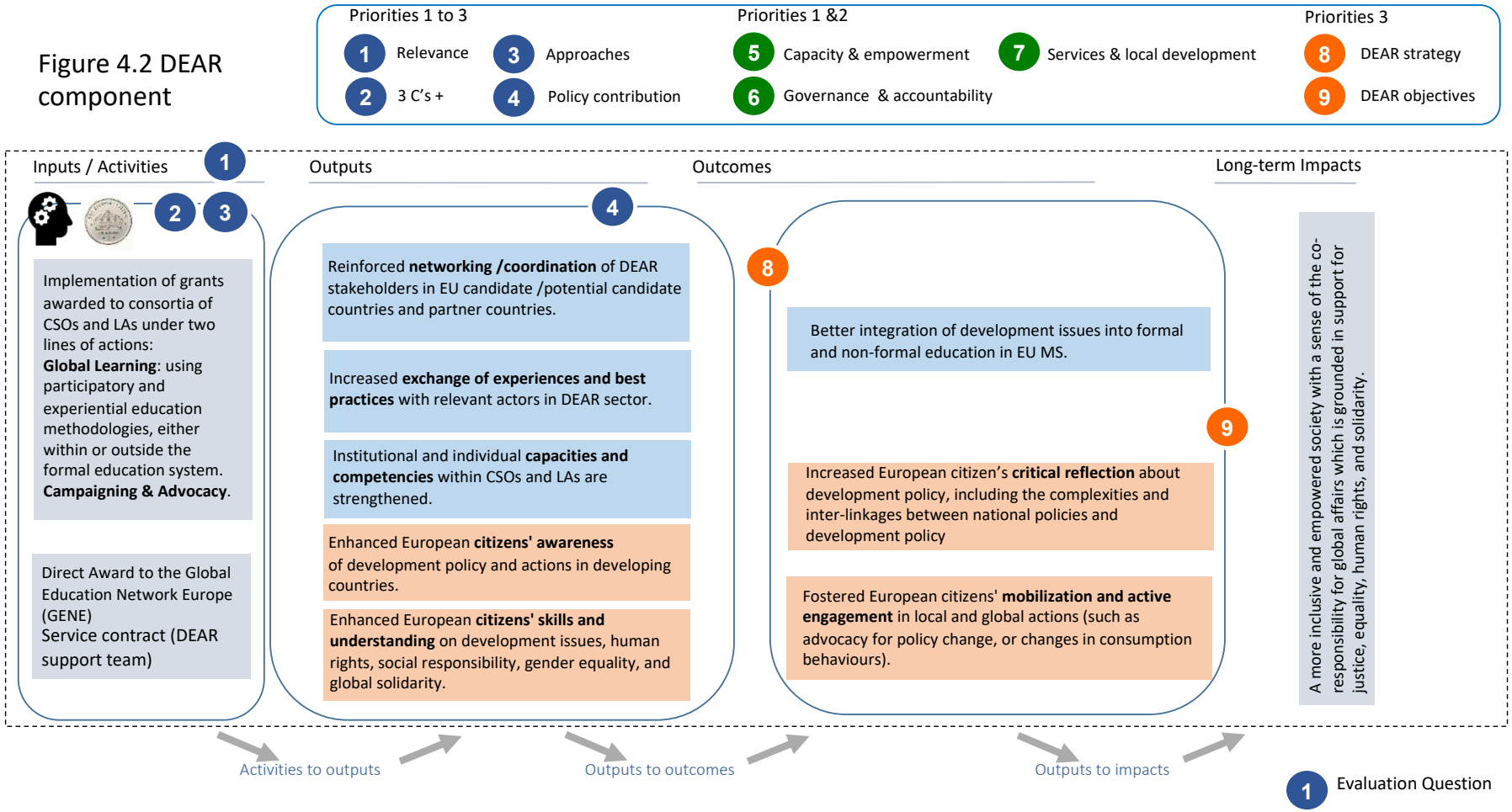


Figure A0.2 DEAR component. Source: Evaluation team.



A 3.3 DEAR

The DEAR interventions reflect the MIP 2014-2020. They present two strategic objectives: i) concentrating on value-added and complementarity; and ii) focusing on global issues. Under each, a number of expected results are outlined which fall into the groups above. The MIP 2018-2020, which is a further development of the MIP 2014-2020, presents 3 objectives: 1) Support Civil Society Organisations in Development Policy; 2) Foster Development Education and Awareness Raising in Europe; 3) Empowerment of Local Authorities as actors of development, in particular at city level.

An overview of the theory of change for the DEAR component is given in figure 4.2 above. As for the CSO-LA component, this is based on the normative documents and builds on analysis provided in the evaluability assessment and the ToR and is being informed by discussions with DEVCO and the DEAR facility.

Inputs and interventions leading to outputs
The DEAR component of the CSO-LA thematic programme provides a combination of funding and technical assistance. These inputs are channelled via a number of mechanisms and delivery paths, mainly through Calls for Proposals and a number of direct grants.

A call for proposals was launched in 2016, and ultimately grants awarded to consortia of CSOs and LAs under two lines of action: i) Global Learning: using participatory and experiential education methodologies, either within or outside the formal education system; and ii) campaigning and advocacy to raise awareness. At the same time, in recognition of their unique role, two direct awards were made to the Global Education Network Europe (GENE) and the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity of the Council of Europe (North-South Centre). Also, a service contract was awarded to a DEAR Support Team to facilitate learning among CfP grant holders, monitoring and reporting.

The combination of the two lines of actions was to lead to a number of expected outputs. These can be seen as falling into two broad groups:

- Education - Reinforced networking and coordination of DEAR stakeholders in the EU candidate and potential candidate countries and in partner countries; an increased exchange of experiences and best practices among relevant actors in the DEAR area; and strengthened institutional and individual capacities and competencies within CSOs and LAs to implement DEAR actions.

- Awareness - European citizens become more aware of development policies and actions in developing countries; they develop skills and understanding on development issues, human rights, social responsibility, gender equality, and global solidarity.

Outputs - to - intermediate outcomes - to- outcomes
The implicit theory of change, reconstructed here, is that if the outputs are reached and they are put into operation (i.e. made use of), then a number of important and far- reaching outcomes will be achieved including:

- Development issues are better integrated into formal and non-formal education in EU Member States.
- European citizens critically reflect on development policy, including the complexities and inter-linkages between national policies and development policy.
- European citizens are mobilised and engage more actively in local and global actions (such as advocacy for policy change, or changes in consumption behaviours).

Outcomes to impacts

Over time, these outcomes will lead to a more inclusive and empowered society with a sense of the co-responsibility for global affairs, which is grounded in support for justice, equality, human rights, and solidarity. This is the desired impact.

Assumptions and drivers

This chain of achievement from inputs to outputs to outcomes and impacts is dependent on a series of assumptions and also influenced positively by drivers of change. These are complex factors, and while largely external to the programme, it is depended on them. The ToR provide a comprehensive list, which is summarised below:

From activities to outputs

- CSOs and LAs have the interest and capacity to respond to the EU CfPs.
- The enabling environment provides space for CSOs and LAs to operate effectively (minor relevance for most member states).

From outputs to outcomes

- The proposals put forward and financed have sufficient focus to reach a critical mass for change.
- CSOs and LAs are willing to work together, network and share knowledge.
- Capacity constraints can be overcome through the capacity development measures available through the programme.
- The enabling environment even if far from perfect is sufficient for the insights, attitude and behaviour change to take place.

From outcomes to impact

- Political changes and populist movements within the MS do not work against the objectives of the DEAR component.
- Migration and other pressures on society can be and are framed so as to support, rather than undermine, the long-term vision of the DEAR component.

Annex 4 Links between findings, conclusions and recommendations

Figure A0.1 Link between cluster findings and conclusions. Source: Evaluation team.

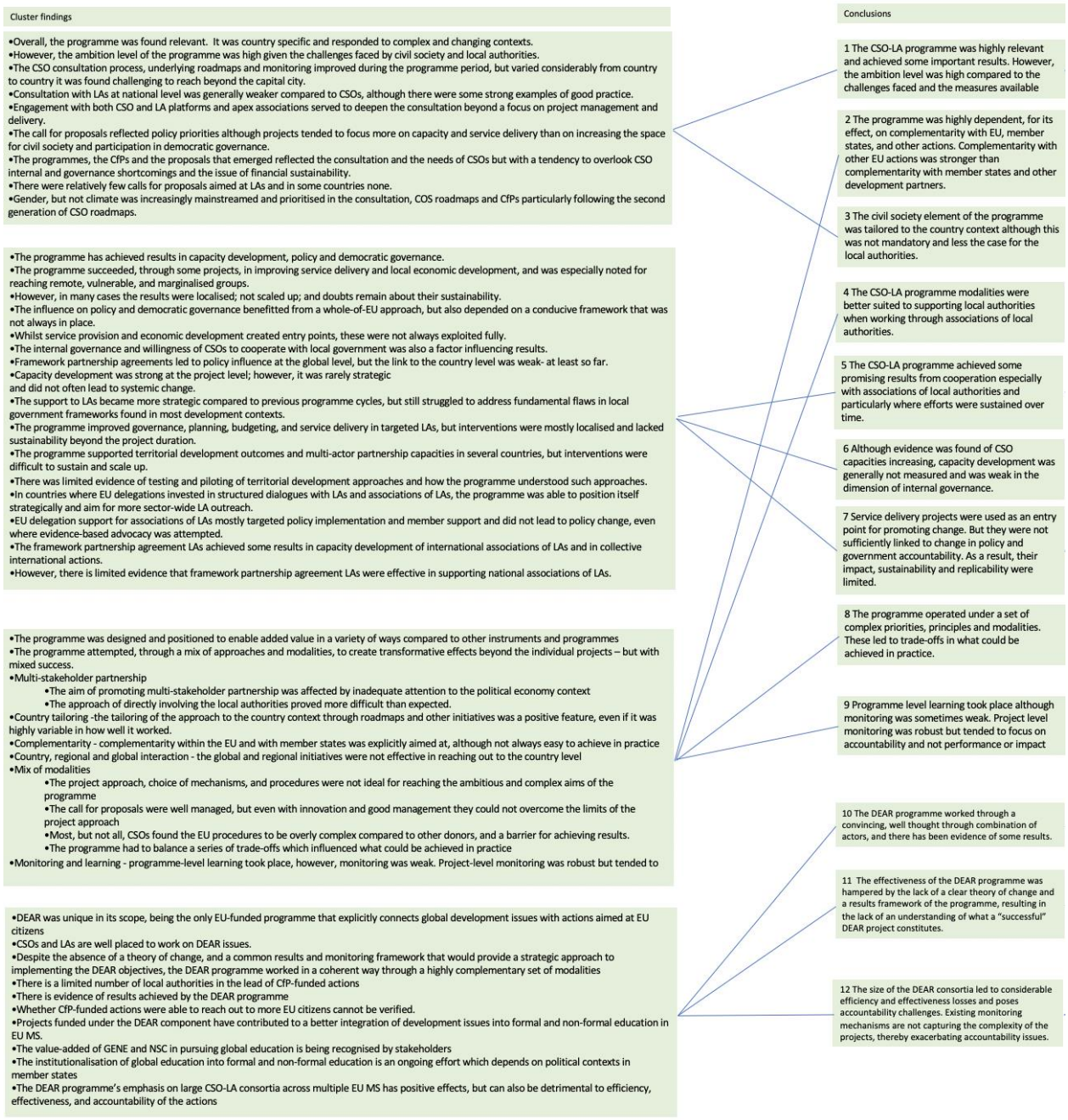
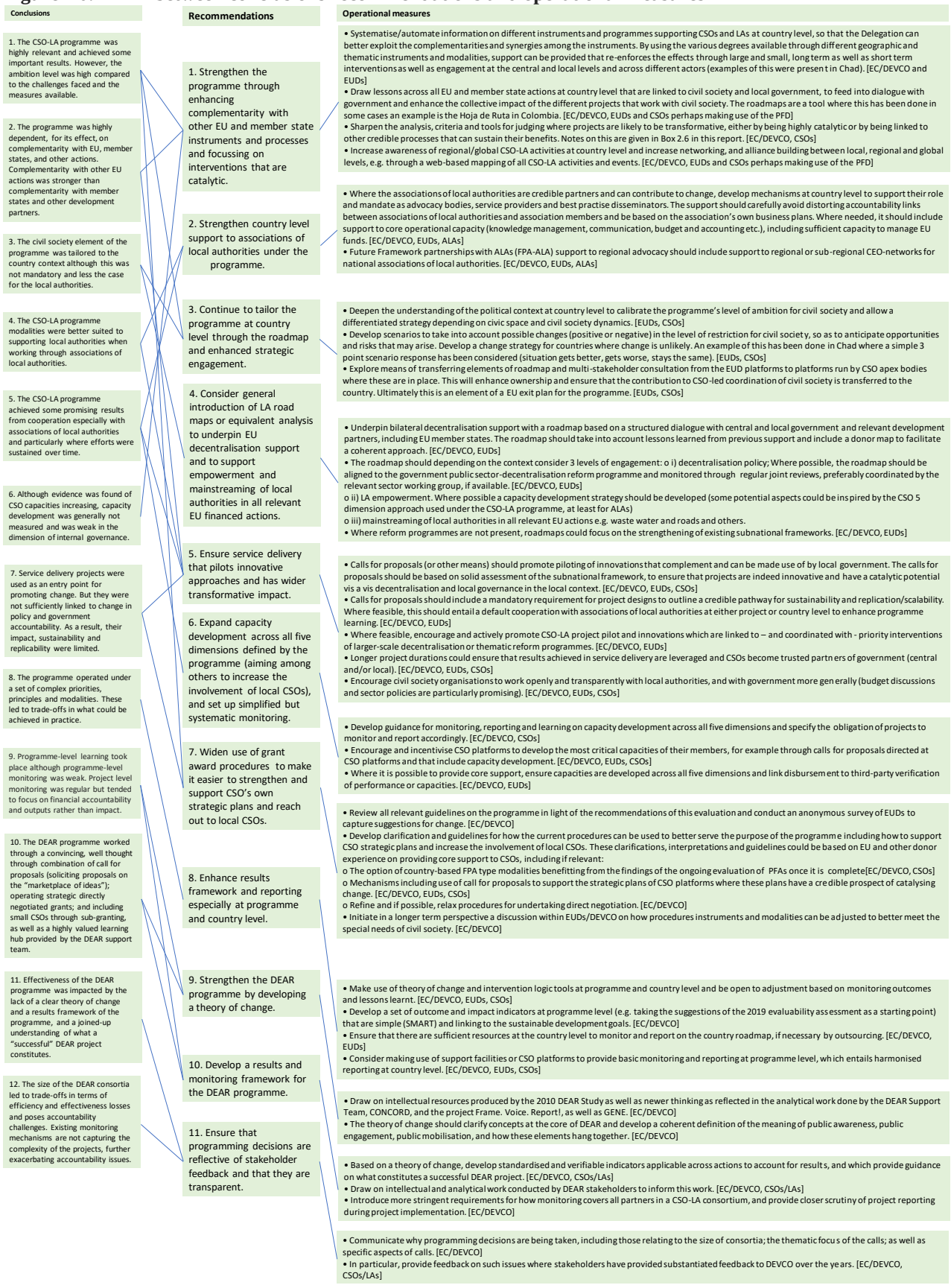


Figure A0.2 Link between conclusions recommendations and operational measures



Annex 5 Strengths and weaknesses of different funding delivery mechanisms in the CSO-LA programme

Seven different mechanisms are identified below. 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).

Table A0.1 Strengths and weaknesses of different funding delivery mechanisms in the CSO-LA programme

Mechanism	Strength	Weakness	Trade-offs, issues and mitigation action
Call for proposals	• 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	• 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	• <u>Wastage of resources</u> ○ 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> ○ Consider requiring that actions to be financed are part of CSOs strategic plans. • <u>Alignment with wider processes</u> ○ 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> ○ Consider requiring association between national and local CSOs networks - covering more than one

Mechanism	Strength	Weakness	Trade-offs, issues and mitigation action
			municipality as exchange is important for scaling up.
CfP with sub-granting	• Contractually engages smaller grassroot 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	• 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	As above but in addition: • <u>Short project duration</u> ○ project duration can be extended for sub-granting to ensure enough time for core activities • <u>Domination of large CSOs</u> ○ co-financing can be relaxed to encourage national apex bodies to apply
Follow up grants	• 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	• Tends to reduce the number of new and different CSOs that can be engaged with • Could introduce a dependency on EU funding	• <u>Insufficient diversity</u> ○ this could be increased by asking for on-granting or delegation in follow up phases • <u>Single donor dependency</u> – ○ can be reduced through increasing co-financing requirement in follow up grants

Mechanism	Strength	Weakness	Trade-offs, issues and mitigation action
Direct grant	• 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	• 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	• Insufficient diversity (concentration) ○ limit use for small strategic and catalytic amounts e.g. for studies to leave funding for others • Highly restrictive eligibility ○ relax eligibility or if only a few eligible invite a joint action ○ Focus on CSO apex bodies • Delegation workload ○ use in conjunction with follow up grant to reduce new negotiations
FPA	• 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	• 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	**3.4** FPAs can be negotiated or in response to calls • Insufficient diversity (concentration) ○ FPAs could potentially be made at country level with national platforms/apex bodies
Operational Support	• 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	• • 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.	• Managing risks ○ conditions can be put on improving internal governance • Single donor dependency ○ Sustainability – requirement for co-financing can be increased over time

Mechanism	Strength	Weakness	Trade-offs, issues and mitigation action
	and networks that know national and subnational conditions. Can support strategic plans more flexibly than through projects.		
Core support (new) as practiced by other donors	• 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	• 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	• <u>Ensuring transparency</u> ○ calls can be made for submitting strategic plans and track records • <u>Performance incentives</u> ○ Follow up grants – can be used to incentivise internal governance and performance

Source: PEManalysis; Concord (2016); Internal DEVCO presentation

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