



Technical Assistance for
Civil Society Organisations



This project is funded
by the European Union.

Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations in the IPA Countries TACSO

EuropeAid/127427/C/SER/Multi/5

SERBIA

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

Belgrade
6 January 2010

TACSO Serbia Office • Spanskih Boraca 24, stan broj 3 • 11070 Novi Beograd
tel: + 381 11 212 93 73 • fax: + 381 11 212 93 72 • e-mail: info.rs@tacso.org

Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
1. THE CIVIL SOCIETY ENVIRONMENT.....	5
1.1 Legal framework – an analysis of relevant law and financial regulations.....	5
New Law on Associations.....	5
Law of Legacies, Foundations and Funds, 1989	6
Tax laws applying to CSOs.....	6
Deductibility of Charitable Contributions	6
Value Added Tax.....	7
1.2 Donors and funding opportunities	7
International Donors.....	7
Domestic Private Donors	8
Central Government.....	9
Province, city and municipality funds for the development of the non-profit sector	9
1.3 Government mechanisms for civil society-government cooperation and the policy framework determining government-civil society relations.....	9
Agreements on Cooperation.....	10
Consultation Forum.....	10
1.4 Government (local and national) institutional capacities for engaging civil society	10
CSO participation in government strategy.....	11
CSO Participation in the legislative procedure	11
1.5 Public perceptions and support of civil society and its various segments.....	11
2. CSO ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITIES	12
2.1 Overview of the civil society community in Serbia.....	12
Structure of civil society.....	12
Field of operation / activities.....	14
2.2 Human resources and technical skills	15
2.3 Strategic strengths of CSOs in Serbia	16
2.4 Analytical capacities.....	16
2.5 Relationships with other actors –networking and partnerships.....	17
CSO – CSO relationships.....	17

CSO – state and government relationships	18
2.6 Material and financial stability and resilience	18
3. CIVIL SOCIETY MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENTS, IMPACTS AND CHALLENGES	19
3.1 Milestone achievements and impacts in the country	19
Democratic change	19
Human rights and social policy legislation	19
CSOs as social service providers	19
3.2 Shortfalls in CSO performance	19
Monitoring governance and democratic process	19
Economic development	20
Participation in the process of European integration	20
4. CONCLUSIONS	20
4.1 Summary of strategic issues of relevance to the project	20
4.2 Needs assessment conclusions	21
Civil society environment	21
CSO organisational capacities	22
4.3 Recommendations for the regional project work plan	22
4.4 Recommendations for country specific work plan	23
Civil society environment	23
CSO organisational capacities	23
Annex 1. Acronyms and abbreviations used in the text	24
Annex 2 Research methodology	25
Annex 3 CSO databases in Serbia	26
Annex 4 List of organisations consulted	27
Annex 5 References	29

INTRODUCTION

This study is one of eight country assessments of civil society capacities conducted as a preliminary activity within the EC-funded project Technical Assistance to Civil Society (TACSO) in IPA Countries (EuropeAid/127427/C/SER/Multi/5), implemented by SIPU International, during the period August 2009 – July 2011. The aim of the study is to provide a comprehensive assessment of civil society in Serbia and the environment that it works in, including its strengths and weaknesses, and its impacts to date and the challenges it faces to its further development. The study is based upon a combination of desk research embracing all relevant documentation, including legal and financial legislation applicable to civil society, previous civil society mappings and evaluations, situation analyses, policy documents and country-specific academic literature, and a consultative stakeholder analysis carried out by means of focus groups, interviews and questionnaire surveys with civil society organisations (CSOs), government actors, donor organisations and other institutional players. The study is an integral part of the project inception and it provides the premise for the majority of other project activities by serving as the basis of the development of regional as well as national work plans to be implemented during the project's duration.

In line with the project's Terms of Reference and SIPU's technical proposal, the study understands civil society in the following two complementary ways:

1. All organisational structures whose members have objectives and responsibilities that are of general interest and who also act as mediators between the public authorities and citizens. This definition clearly emphasises the associational character of civil society, while also accentuating its representational role. Civil society would include a variety of organisational types, including, NGOs, mass movements, cooperatives, professional associations, cultural and religious groups, trades unions and grassroots community groups (CBOs), etc.
2. A space for views, policies and action supportive of alternatives to those promoted by government and the private sector. This definition places the emphasis on social inclusion, social and political pluralism and the rights of expression in developing a participatory democracy.

The paper is composed of four sections:

- Section one provides an analysis of the civil society environment, including the legal framework governing CSOs and their work, the current donor opportunities and other sources of civil society funding, the government mechanisms for cooperation with and support of civil society and the policy framework determining government-civil society relations and public perceptions and support for civil society and its activities.
- Section two gives an overview of the main features of civil society: the types of organisation represented and their key organisational characteristics, the types of activity they carry out and their main sectoral interests, their geographical distribution and way they are structured within an overall civil society architecture. CSOs are assessed according to their technical, organisational and institutional capacities, including human resources and technical skills, strategic strengths, analytical capabilities, external relations with other actors including other CSOs, government and the community, and material and financial stability and resilience.
- Section three summarises the main achievements of civil society to date, noting key milestone achievements and broader social impacts, and also identifies shortfalls in civil society performance in need of strengthening and further development.

- Section four sums up the most important institutional and organisational capacity needs of civil society in the country and identifies key strategic issues for the implementation of the project. By way of conclusion, recommendations are made for both the project's regional work plan and country-specific work plan.

1. THE CIVIL SOCIETY ENVIRONMENT

1.1 Legal framework – an analysis of relevant law and financial regulations

The legal framework governing CSOs in Serbia is at a point of transition, as a New Law of Associations defining precise rules regarding CSO registration and their operations came into force on 22 October 2009. The new law provides a social definition of not-for-profit associations as “voluntary and non-governmental organizations organized for achieving and enhancing joint objectives and interests which are not prohibited by the Constitution or other Legal Provisions”. It also recognises a number of specific types of organisation for inclusion in a broader definition of civil society.

The New Law replaces two laws whose origins date back to ex-Yugoslavia and which had not been updated to take account of the changed political landscape, as well as the perceived purposes of CSOs and the socio-economic and political environment in which they operate.¹ CSOs in Serbia have long been dissatisfied with the environment in which they work, owing to the general inadequacy of the previous legal framework and had made repeated attempts since 2000 to bring new CSO legislation before Parliament, which had been thwarted until now owing to poor government-CSO cooperation, and frequent changes of government and calls for national elections.

The New Law is in accordance with European standards and best international practice and will go a long way towards creating an enabling environment for CSOs. However in other areas of law, particularly those concerning tax and fiscal measures, laws continue to offer no specific allowances for not-for-profit organizations, treating CSOs as if they were small or medium sized profit-making enterprises.

New Law on Associations

The New Law was drafted by a working group within the Ministry of State Administration and Local-Self Government's, with considerable civil society participation with the input from a wide range of legal and civil society experts, including the Council of Europe. It provides, for the first time, the complete legal framework for creation, status and operations of associations in Serbia. It also enables international NGOs to operate legally in Serbia, something which officially not been regulated for previously.

Key regulations of the law include:

- (Voluntary) re-registration under the new law within 18 month. It is likely that a small number of CSOs will not re-register and continue to operate as informal organisations;
- Ensuring the right of informal or non-registered organisations to operate;

¹ The Law on Associations of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1990), and the Law on Associations of the Socialist Republic of Serbia (1982). Despite considerable uncertainty concerning the validity of the Federal Law in the time of the rump Yugoslavia states after 1991, and more recently the present Republic of Serbia, most associations are registered under the Federal Law on Associations – probably for reasons of more flexible registrations requirements.

- The creation of a unified official Registry of all associations;
- Reduction in the number of founding members necessary to establish an association from 10 to 3. In addition, the new law clearly states that founders may be either private individuals or legal entities (businesses or other CSOs), whereas both old laws appeared to preclude this second category.
- Provision for funding from the National Budget, the budgets of autonomous provinces (Vojvodina) and municipal budgets for activities of those associations whose objectives are of general public interest. Although there is no legal definition in law of what constitutes “public interest,” this law suggests a long list of activities eligible for funding, mainly in the fields of health and social protection, the affirmation of minority and human rights, education and culture.

Law of Legacies, Foundations and Funds, 1989

The law governing legacies, foundations and funds is poorly specified, outdated and has in many ways lost any relevance in modern Serbia. The law provides for three categories of non-membership, property-based organizations. All three must promote purposes of vaguely defined “public interest”, with an implied focus on the creative arts and humanitarian aid.² The definition of the categories depends upon the type of founders and the source of founding property. These categorisations are restrictive, but more importantly they make a critical distinction between socially owned and privately owned property. As the 2006 Republic of Serbia Constitution no longer recognises the concept of socially owned property, there is now considerable uncertainty as to the legality of foundations which exist by definition to manage socially owned resources.

A new law is in the process of being drafted under a process similar to that of the New Law on Associations, led by a coalition of NGOs funded by the BCIF (Balkan Community Initiatives Fund) in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, which will, among other things, redefine social activity in this area under two new entities according to European standards and freedoms: foundations and private endowments. For the time being, however, the old law remains in force.

Tax laws applying to CSOs

Associations, as well as foundations, legacies, and funds, are exempt from income tax on foreign and domestic grants, donations, membership dues, and similar forms of income which are not the result of economic activities. Associations are however, subject to 2.5% tax on gifts (gifts-in-kind and also property), but foundations etc are exempt from these taxes. Distinguishing between donations and gifts is an area of ambiguity, subject to the interpretation of the Tax Administration.

According to the Enterprise Profit Tax Law, profit generated by CSO activities is only exempt income tax up to a limit of 300,000 dinars (approx. 3,150 EUR) exempt from income tax, provided that: profits are used to further the organisations objectives, that salaries do not exceed double their equivalents in the commercial sector and that NGOs economic activities do not constitute unfair competition with the private business sector.

Deductibility of Charitable Contributions

Businesses may deduct up to 3.5% gross income for charitable donations for the following purposes: medical, educational, scientific, humanitarian, religious, environmental protection and sport purposes. Support to cultural activities, however, can only be deducted up to a maximum of 1.5% income. There are no incentives provided for individuals to support charitable ventures.

² The law specifies that legacies, foundations and funds will operate with the purpose of stimulating creativity, accomplishment of humanitarian and other goals of public interest.

Value Added Tax

Currently, any organisation (commercial or non-profit) with an annual turnover of less than 4 million Dinars (approx. 43,000 EUR) is exempt from registering for VAT. Concessions to CSO activity are otherwise fairly limited. Foreign grants and donations are not subject to VAT. In addition, foreign donors are exempt from paying VAT on humanitarian good imported into Serbia. Most importantly, while CSOs are not provided special exemptions, the law does exempt a number of services and supplies which are often provided by CSOs in the field of: medicine, social welfare, culture, education, science, religion, and sports.

1.2 Donors and funding opportunities

Civil society in Serbia remains overly dependent on international donors and anecdotal evidence suggests that as much as 75% of all CSO funding is from foreign sources. In recent times, as is the case across the Balkans, Serbia has seen a gradual, but marked reduction of activity by foreign donors and there is considerable competition for reduced funding opportunities in the country. Most European embassies and government development agencies have indicated that they will be gradually phasing out their support to Serbia as the country progresses towards European integration.

On the other hand, the USAID 2008 NGO Sustainability Index observes increased support for CSOs from both local and central governments over the last year or so, attributing this partly to improved lobbying on the part of CSOs generally. In the absence of formal and transparent criteria for awarding CSOs government funding, successful lobbying is often dependent on personal connections and political affiliations.

International Donors

European Union. Collectively, the various programmes and instruments through which the EU supports CSOs and their activities represent the largest single source of civil society funding in Serbia. In 2008 it was estimated that CSOs in Serbia received around 6 million EUR support from the EU. Current EU support includes:

1. CARDS – 2 remaining civil society initiatives:

- a. **European Integration Fund** - worth 1.6 million EUR, came to close in October 2009 after providing 16 grants to CSOs to carry out education and dialogue projects on the process of European integration.
- b. **Social Innovation Fund** – is a nationwide programme of grant support and capacity building, implemented by UNDP at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, for CSOs and municipalities to tackle poverty alleviation through social and economic service-delivery activities. The SIF has disbursed over 6 million EUR, secured from the state budget, the Kingdom of Norway and EC/UNDP, to support over 250 project's) since its inception in 2003 and is due to end in 2010 (see also below under central government).

2. **IPA Civil Society Facility (IPA 1): Strengthening Serbia-EU Civil Society Dialogue:** a facility providing project support of between 50,000 and 150,000 EUR to CSOs in promoting dialogue with EU countries. Implemented by German consultancy GOPA, with a total budget of 4 million EUR. (8,5 million in period 2007-2010 from IPA)

3. **Cross-Border Cooperation (IPA 2): Cross-border cooperation** – small grants to CSOs and municipalities for a range of socio-economic two-country partnership projects, with all EU and potential EU member countries. Annual calls for proposal.³
4. **EIDHR** - grant scheme with a budget of around 1.2 million EUR per two-year period, supporting approximately twenty CSOs per cycle in the fields of human and minority rights.
5. **Other EU-funded programs** also support the Civil Sector in various ways, including the PROGRESS Program, the Youth Program and the Culture Program.

USAID. Traditionally the biggest foreign supporter of civil society in Serbia, USAID has scaled down its activity, but will maintain support to CSOs in Serbia till 2015. Currently USAID is funding:

1. **Civil Society Advocacy Initiative (CSAI)** - a five-year grant and capacity-building program running from 2006 – 2011, implemented by ISC (Institute for Sustainable Communities in partnership with key local and regional CSOs.⁴ CSAI has a total budget of 18,5 million EUR and has so far given grants and assistance to over 188 CSOs, and delivered a series of 68 trainings on advocacy and various technical skills and reached 778 representatives of 147 CSOs in Mobile Advocacy School.

The World Bank has been running a Small Grants / Civil Society Fund Program for Serbian CSOs since 2004, giving grants to around ten CSOs a year. The program provides grants to civil society organizations to promote dialogue and disseminate information about development

Other international donors:

1. **The Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)** under the SECTOR Framework Programme (in cooperation with SIDA) has distributed 175,00 EUR over two cycles to environmental NGOs in small grants since 2007
2. **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)** - has provided 200,000 EUR for small-scale community services in SW Serbia over two years under the auspices of UNDP's PRO2 municipal support programme (EAR / CARDS 05)
3. **Embassies:** Great Britain, Norway, Japan, Sweden, the Netherlands, Canada, the Czech Republic inter alia.

Domestic Private Donors

Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF): The most important domestic grant giver, focusing on supporting smaller CSOs. Total amount disbursed annually is a relatively modest 500,000 – 600,000 EUR, but its grant application procedures are accessible, straightforward and tailored to the needs of local and grassroots CSO Projects.

Corporate philanthropy – The total amount of financial support for civil society from the business sector remains small, but there is a positive trend of increasing numbers of businesses supporting CSOs. Recently a number of large foreign corporations, such as Philip Morris and La Farge, have begun to show interest in this area (USAID 2009), and Serbian and foreign banks are among the most active. At the local level a lot of support goes unrecorded. A lack of systematic monitoring of corporate support for CSOs means that total amounts offered by business are probably under-

³ Total value of CBC programmes 2007-2009, including 15% participating country contributions (million EUR): Serbia-Romania 22.3; S-Bulgaria 13.6; S-Hungary 21.7, S-Montenegro 3.8; S- Croatia 6.2. + Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

⁴ ISC's partners are: Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF), Civic Initiatives, the European Center for Non-Profit Law (ENCL), and the SMART Collective

estimated. Contrary to popular belief, there are sufficient tax incentives in law to encourage corporate philanthropy.

Central Government

Government support for civil society has grown in recent years and nominally it is now the single biggest source of support to civil society. In 2007, official government spending on civil society from the State Budget (including central government, provincial and municipal budgets) totalled 60 million EUR (CRNPS 2008), having risen roughly fourfold since 2003. Real support of CSOs is likely, however, to be considerably lower, as an unknown proportion of the 60 million was also allocated to the support of sports and religious organizations, as well as political parties. Accessing the remainder intended for CSOs is an unpredictable process, as support is rarely disbursed within the framework of a planned programme or grant scheme, according to clear, transparent guidelines and qualitative criteria.

A number of central ministries, however, have begun to provide increasing support to civil society, most notably the Ministry of Youth and Sports which has spent over 3 million EUR on various CSO projects towards the implementation of the National Youth Strategy since its adoption during 2008.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is also active in supporting CSOs which provide social care services in the community. The Ministry is a partner in EU / UNDP's SIF and has been responsible for disbursing to local service providers the approximately 3 million EUR matching funds raised from the Serbian State budget for the project. To date 260 projects delivering services to vulnerable communities have been funded by SIF.

Most ministries in Serbia will sign individual service contracts with CSOs for a variety of services (including social protection, health, education and employment) using money available under the budget line for general support to civil society.⁵

Province, city and municipality funds for the development of the non-profit sector

The Fund for the Development of the Non-Profit Sector in Vojvodina was founded in 2004 and was the first fund of this type in Serbia. It supports projects that promote the development of CSOs and the establishment of systematic cooperation between Local Authorities and CSOs. Other cities, including Belgrade, Niš, Novi Sad, and Zrenjanin have established similar funds, but remain in the early stages of development.

1.3 Government mechanisms for civil society-government cooperation and the policy framework determining government-civil society relations.

There is no office or institutional structure within the Serbian government responsible for mediating relations with civil society, no government strategy concerning civil society and no discernible government policy towards the sector as a whole.⁶ Within the Prime Minister's office a Council of the President of the Republic for Relations with Civil Society (or Civil Society Council),

⁵ New regulations concerning the delivery of social services and their standards are soon to be introduced. These represent a new funding opportunity for CSOs with sufficient qualified human resources in place, as the regulations foresee greater CSO involvement in the area of social protection.

⁶ Identification of strengthening civil society-government cooperation as a priority for government policy making appears to be restricted to a single mention in The National Programme for Integration - NPI (2008), in the section on Human Rights and the Protection of Minorities, which states one of its priorities to be: "To encourage the development of civil society organizations and establish a regular consultation process on political initiatives."

which includes some CSO representation, does formally exist for facilitating CSO-government communication. However, this body is a more or less *ad hoc* advisory body which meets infrequently and proceeds without clear and agreed terms of reference.

Otherwise, various forms of cooperation between the Government and civil society, or even individual CSOs and CSO partnerships, appear to be established on a case-by-case basis, according to sector or departmental need. In general, interaction between the Government and CSOs is still marked by fragmented cooperation, lack of Government understanding for civil society, and a selective approach towards individual CSOs. There are few examples of formal, structured forms of cooperation between government and civil society as a sector.

After considerable lobbying efforts on the part of civil society, the government has recently announced that it will institute a Government Office for Cooperation with Civil Society. This is considered to be essential to the creation of government strategy for establishing a more favourable environment for civil society.

Agreements on Cooperation

The Office for European Integration (SEIO) has signed a formal agreement with civil society and accordingly consults regularly with CSOs. Similarly, the PRSP Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also works with NGOs on a regular basis, this time through a framework at the project level for establishing partner relations with CSOs. The most notable government-CSO partnership is a similar framework agreement applied by the Ministry of Youth and Sports for initiating practical cooperation with CSOs based on identified common principles and values.

Consultation Forum

The National Parliamentary Forum is a periodic meeting of parliamentarians and some representatives from civil society to discuss key issues arising from the national Poverty Reduction Strategy in order to identify best practice and learning in the implementation process.

1.4 Government (local and national) institutional capacities for engaging civil society

Over the last year or two, relations between civil society and the government in general have improved and there are clear signs that the state appears to be more ready to engage with civil society over social policy than ever before. Ministries and government institutions are sending an increasing number of invitations to civil society representatives to participate in working groups, to submit their own reports on certain issues, and to submit their reflections and suggestions on certain laws, etc. On the other hand, this apparent new-found commitment is, in the main, donor-driven and primarily cosmetic. There are low levels of understanding within government departments of civil society and the benefits of cooperation with CSOs, a lack of a unified, transparent and efficient mechanism to enable citizens to participate in the law-drafting procedure, and no accepted procedure for appointing representatives of the public onto consultative and working groups at the national and local level (Civic Initiatives 2009), Government officials remain uninterested in providing a genuine space for civil society to take part in the policy making process. Social dialogue in the true sense of the word, between representatives of the government and organised interest groups, has not truly developed.

CSO participation in government strategy

There are over 40 national strategies in Serbia today, many of which included some form of consultation with civil society or other form of CSO participation during their development. Although civil society involvement has usually been at the behest of the international donors promoting the strategic process, CSOs can claim to have influenced current government social policy in a number of key areas:

- **The Poverty Reduction Strategy (2003)**, sponsored by the World Bank and the EC (CARDS 03), included an extensive national process of civil society consultations and set the standard for subsequent strategic planning. This included the establishment of a **Civil Society Advisory Committee** comprising 11 NGOs representing poor and vulnerable groups - the Roma, the disabled, refugees and single parents.

- **The National Youth Strategy (2007)** was developed by wide consultative mechanisms with active participation of youth CSOs and also awarded youth CSOs a major role in its implementation as well;

- **The Social Protection Development Strategy (2005)** has the objective to facilitate the development of, among others, the partnership between public, non-governmental and private social service providers. This Strategy helped CSOs to become recognized as social service providers.

- **Other national strategies** which have involved CSO participation and assist in establishing policy frameworks favourable to civil society at the sectoral level include: The National Employment Strategy (2005), National Strategy of Economic Development 2006-2012, Strategy for Public Administration Reform in the Republic of Serbia (2004), The National Strategy for Improvement of the Position of Women and the Promotion of Gender Equality, The National Strategy for Improving the Position of the Roma Population, The National Strategy to Improve the Position of Persons with Disabilities, The Serbian Action Plan for Children.

CSO Participation in the legislative procedure

CSOs have occasionally been consulted during the drafting of legislation, especially in areas such as social protection and social policy. A recent example is the case of the Law on the Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, which engaged a considerable number of CSOs that deal with this issue.

CSOs are working in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture on the New Law of Foundations, and similarly, the Ministry of Finance is working with two major Serbian NGOs – CRNPS and BCIF – on developing legislative means of providing CSOs fiscal benefits to facilitate their work.

1.5 Public perceptions and support of civil society and its various segments

Civil society's public image in Serbia is certainly problematic and in many ways negative. There is a fundamental lack of understanding amongst the public as to what the term "civil society" means, and what is the legitimate range of activities that a CSO might carry out. For many ordinary people, CSOs are regarded as wealthy donor-driven and foreign-funded opportunist organisations, which lack transparency and accountability, and do not respond in any obvious way to their everyday concerns.

On the other hand, Serbian civil society is still associated closely with the small number of outspoken human rights NGOs which have campaigned forcefully over time against Serbia's

involvement in the recent conflicts including ethnic cleansing, war crimes and other human rights violations. In the past, these NGOs were frequently denounced in the Media and government circles as traitors, and they continue to be branded as such by certain politicians. Among mainstream conservative circles suspicion of CSOs as anti-government, foreign-serving and even anti-Serbian, continues to prejudice the public against civil society.

Recent public surveys suggest that Serbian citizens have very little trust in NGOs, both in absolute terms and in relation to other key national institutions. NGOs are trusted by only a little over 10% of those surveyed. While this compares relatively favourably with political parties (6.6%), the Judiciary (7.3%) and the Government (7.4%), it is given perspective by the considerably higher scores indicated for public trust in the Church (38.30%), the Army (27.7%) and the Police (20.1%).

A part of the problem is lack of public recognition for the diversity of civil society organisations and activity. A key factor here is the low level of media coverage of CSO events, especially at the national level, which are not considered to be news worthy. Poor media coverage itself is a reflection of the overall turbulent and divisive socio-political context of Serbia which, dominated by constant, bitter, self-referential public spats between political rivals at the centre, closes out the political space for CSOs to work in and appears, in the public eye to render civil society an irrelevant side show.

2. CSO ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITIES

2.1 Overview of the civil society community in Serbia

Structure of civil society

There are very few reliable data on CSOs in Serbia owing to the lack of a single unified register of CSOs covering all associations, as well as other forms of not-for-profit organisations. Databases maintained by NGOs, such as CRNPS and the national FeNS network,⁷ are incomplete, as they rely on self-reporting and self-selection. While it is thought that there may be as many as 25,000 registered CSOs in Serbia, a reasonable estimate of active organisations would be between 2,000 and 3,000.

A cursory glance at the available CSO databases suggests that civil society activity is represented across the whole country, but is clearly centred in the capital Belgrade and the larger regional centres, such as Novi Sad, Nis, Kragujevac and Kraljevo. There is a supposed correlation with CSO presence and socio-economic wellbeing, with civil society activity clearly lower in the poorer areas of South and South-West Serbia.

At the centre, particularly in Belgrade and in seats of learning, such as Novi Sad the capital of the autonomous province of Vojvodina in the north, there is a highly visible “elite” of professional, modern NGOs, undertaking advocacy and capacity building in a number of areas of social policy, good governance, human rights and economic development. These organisations are socially progressive, entrepreneurial, innovative and well-versed in international influences and socio-political agendas, both within the region and in the context of European integration. While their numbers are limited and fluid, being subject to cycles of organisational dormancy or collapse and renewal, as a result of fluctuating success in securing finance, these NGOs represent the immediate successors of the vociferous campaigning rights-based civil society which emerged in the early 1990s in response to the social and economic dislocations caused by the collapse of

⁷ CRNPS: <http://www.crnps.org.rs/direktorijum/pretraga.asp>; FeNS: <http://www.fens.org.rs/clanice.htm>; See Annex 3 for details of these and other CSO databases.

Yugoslavia and the ensuing violent conflicts. Taking advantage of newly proclaimed formal political plurality, these pioneers of modern NGO-ism focused variously on combating human rights violations, disbursing humanitarian aid for refugees and displaced persons, promoting peace and reconciliation, fighting poverty, and promoting democratic values and principles.

A second recognisable category of CSOs, comprising possibly the largest single grouping numerically, are those associations established mostly during communist times with mandates to provide or coordinate services in the community. These are generally old-fashioned organisations in terms of their administration and their approach to stakeholders, particularly the state and government. Originally they were shaped by and functionalised within the state “socially owned” structures and funded through state budgets. These associations include traditional professional associations, cultural and sports groups, service providers for those with special needs (such as the blind, deaf, those with learning difficulties etc) and hobby groups, which often continue to attract funding from government, albeit in usually insufficiently large amount. Typically these CSOs are conservative, socially and politically passive, and with few human resources, organisationally weak, but they do have the necessary capacities to organise activities in the community and to reach their particular target or membership group.

Many of the above category of CSOs are remarkable also for being so-called “self help” member organizations in the community, which are organised within nationwide unions or federations, according to structures inherited from communist times. These organizations are spread out all over Serbia, and they have branch offices in almost every town and municipality. Their estimated number is around 450-500. At the central level the various unions (Deaf Union of Serbia, Association of Paraplegics and Quadriplegics of Serbia, and so on) are formally united under a single umbrella, the National Organization of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia.

A further, smaller group of more or less professionalized NGOs has emerged from the so-called “traditional” association above. These associations retain their member-based service-orientation, but have been transformed, in most cases through inclusion in internationally sponsored capacity building programmes, into modern, active NGOs which apply a rights-based and capacity-building approach to their activities with their membership, leading them into areas such as advocacy, policy dialogue and the provision of services to members which aim to empower by increasing their knowledge, skills and access to resources. Typically, these groups are included in national and international sector-based alliances and networks with like-minded regional associations and international NGOs specialising in their field (youth, women, disability, professional associations, etc).

At the neighbourhood level there is a considerable number of voluntary village councils or “Community Development Associations” (CDAs), most of which were established earlier in the decade under a nationwide USAID-funded community programme.⁸ These are engaged in local economic development planning and undertaking small-scale development projects, mobilising resources from the community and the municipality. It is estimated that up to 50% of the near 1000 CDAs originally established continue to operate, many as fully registered CSOs.

⁸ CRDA (Community Revitalization through Democratic Action) ran from 2001 – 2007. The programme covered all areas of Serbia and assisted the development of participatory democratic mechanisms that promoted community involvement in identifying and addressing economic and social needs. It supported community projects in agriculture, small and medium enterprises, tourism, market access and trade, economic and public infrastructure, local economic development, and the environment.

Field of operation / activities

The main CSO database of CSOs active in Serbia, maintained by CRNPS, indicates that, countrywide, civil society retains a traditional focus on social and community services and charitable activities. The dominant means of action in these areas is service delivery, particularly in the areas of social protection, health, education and the law. This has been encouraged by the principle of equality of service providers from the public, private and civil sectors, established by the Strategy for the Development of Social Protection in Serbia (which will be endorsed under the forthcoming new Law on Social Protection) and has opened the door for CSOs to institutionalize their services in the areas of care for the elderly, home care services, day-care services for persons with disability, and counselling services etc. In addition, The Ministry of Health supports CSOs in providing health services to the Roma population, as well as people who live with HIV/AIDS. The Agency for Employment engages CSOs to deliver vocational training to the unemployed and The Ministry of Internal Affairs engages CSOs to train Ministry staff who work with victims of violence.

Table 1. Classification of CSOs on CRNPS database by field of activity

Socio-Humanitarian Issues	530
Culture and Arts	239
Education and Research	215
Community Development (CDAs)	214
Environment	205
Human Rights	168
Youth and Students	149
Business and Vocational Interest	93
Women's Rights	86
International Organisations	64
Peace-building and Non-Violent Action	45
Law	26
Others	138
TOTAL	2,172

Advocacy for change in government policy and social attitudes with regard to the traditional areas of civil society activity – service provision, assistance in the community – is still the exception, and is mainly conducted by the small number of professional NGOs whose mission reflects a more straightforward concern with rights-based action and socio-political change, such as those working in the areas of human rights, women's rights, and youth empowerment.

That being said, there is an increasing number of municipal-level advocacy initiatives, directed at local authorities, concerning a wide variety of local-level policy issues such as, waste disposal, social inclusion and budget monitoring. At this level, however, CSOs rarely have the organisational and financial capacities to sustain concerted campaigns over the longer period, and in very many cases their activities are reduced to shorter-lasting information and educational campaigns or public events.

2.2 Human resources and technical skills

One of the greatest challenges facing all CSOs in Serbia is how to recruit and then retain sufficient numbers of suitably qualified staff and volunteers for the efficient implementation of planned activities. The average CSO does not have access to the financial support necessary to maintain a professional staff. For a great many smaller CSOs this is primarily owing to inadequate project development and fundraising skills, as well as poor access to information regarding grant schemes, government service contracts and opportunities for civil society or social partnerships.

A key determinant, however, of the quality of human resources available to all CSOs in Serbia is the structure and number of available donor funding opportunities. At present there are simply insufficient financial resources in Serbia dedicated to civil society to support all the organisations currently active. The structure of funding also dictates that all but the few professional NGOs which have obtained long-term institutional funding (usually from an international donor) and those community-based self-help groups, whose activities do not require material investments, are more or less dependent on short-term project funding. This is a major impediment to developing a professionally qualified staff. The majority of CSOs adapt to this situation by calling upon the services of activists and experts who are otherwise permanently employed in government social services or the school system, when project opportunities arise. In this way, organisationally, Serbian CSOs often remain human resource and skills “light,” while project workers consider CSO work as their way of undertaking community activism and topping up their regular salary.

The current legal framework governing the use of volunteers discourages CSOs from utilizing them as part of a structured schedule of work over longer periods, as it requires that volunteers receive the same social benefits as paid employees.

Project funding, as well as economic limitations on what organisations can pay are also impacting on the ability of larger fully professionalized NGOs to retain experienced staff. Many trained personnel are moving to the public sector, where jobs are more stable, or the private sector, which provides better salaries. Some CSO experts note that organizations in Belgrade are shrinking, as members of their staff take positions in government institutions or international organizations.

The sector as whole has received considerable inputs in the past in terms of training for technical skills under a variety of international capacity-building programmes. Among the professionalized elite NGOs there is clearly a high level of technical, administrative and managerial competence. This also includes significant capacity for social research and needs analysis allied to often high levels of proficiency in advocacy, social campaigning and policy dialogue

Within the critical mass of “other” organisations, skills levels are generally at a much more basic level. This is partly a function of the small size of core CSO staff or activists. At the same time the average CSO remains poorly versed in all aspects of project cycle management. According to donor organisations, this is most apparent in the continued generally poor quality of project proposals – identification and project development – submitted by CSOs for funding. Some of the more basic fundraising skills, including getting to grips with the complexity of donor forms and accessing information on donor opportunities, are often not in place. Planning capabilities are also often weak, whether these are for organisational, action or longer-term programme plans.

2.3 Strategic strengths of CSOs in Serbia

Although most CSOs probably understand the importance of long-term planning for the achievement of their organizational objectives, the practice of programming strategically within the framework of organisational strengths and envisaged opportunities in the working environment, reinforced by a planned process of organizational development, is rarely practiced. Strategic plans, if they exist, are seldom carried out with appropriate methodologies with the participation of the whole organisation and key stakeholders. Plans submitted to donors as a condition of funding are very often put together in haste on a pro-forma basis.

Notable exceptions are to be found among the small professional “elite” of well-developed organizations which are well familiarized with their working environment, engage in research and analyses of changing trends, and plan the development of their organizational structure. Owing to their higher profile, organisation size or “weight” and their closeness to the political and institutional centre, they have usually managed to position themselves favourably in relation to the democratic and developmental changes gathering pace in Serbia in relation to the process of European integration. These organisations maintain close contacts with partner NGOs in EU countries and are members of a growing number of regional (Balkan) and European NGO networks and internet-based coalitions.

For the remainder, taking the long view is a challenge. Strategic thinking remains an unfamiliar capacity in Serbian organisational culture, not only in civil society, but in business too. Internationally funded capacity-building programmes delivered since the year 2000 have rarely supported either the development of strategy or organisational development. Strategic leadership, a key function of governing bodies, is frequently absent, owing the rarity of truly functioning CSO governing bodies.

Funding insecurity and project dependency militates against effective planning and creates often irresistible pressures for organisations to abandon their mission and a user-oriented approach to achieving organisational objectives in the search for achieving short-term financial security. “Mission creep” and the consequent loss of strategic orientation, as well the dissipation of specialised skills and experience, is a common phenomenon among Serbian CSOs, leading to significant falls in the quality of services provided by CSOs and major negative impacts on organisational sustainability.

2.4 Analytical capacities

Sector-wide there are few CSOs with the analytical capacities necessary for providing the basis for effective advocacy and policy dialogue. Few organisations undertake the most basic social research to ascertain constituency need or to assist in project identification. Documentary and internet research is rarely undertaken to advance programming or setting strategy. Analysis of what research does take place is generally of a low order.

That being said, analytical capacities within the Belgrade-based NGO elite and other fully professional organisations in the larger towns are often of a high order. Apart from specialised socio-economic think tanks, including the Analytical Research Centre “Argument,” which is recognised for its work in research on civil society, there are many CSOs, particularly those engaged in capacity building and advocacy, for which social research and its analysis is a key output and also the basis for programming. Well known examples include, Civic Initiatives (civic education and democratic development), The Centre for Development of the Non-Profit Sector

(CRNPS), The Centre for Free Elections and Democracy (CESID), Transparency Serbia (anti-corruption watchdog), The Serbian European Movement (Promotion of plural democracy and European values), The Centre for Liberal-Democratic Studies (CLDS – socio-economic and political think tank), and the 484 Group (refugee / displaced persons and peace building).

2.5 Relationships with other actors –networking and partnerships

CSO – CSO relationships

CSOs in Serbia routinely form partnerships with other CSOs, particularly for the implementation of individual projects. The practice of partnership was heavily promoted in the past by donors and international NGOs, and it was often imposed on the sector as a condition of funding or other support. However, the benefits of partnership are now being increasingly recognised by CSOs and it is a growing practice within civil society. Very few projects today are carried out by just one single CSO.

In addition, CSOs are forming cross-sector partnerships, with local self-governments and public institutions, for example, with increasing regularity. Such social partnerships are becoming a popular way of applying for and implementing EU-funded projects, which are of mutual benefit to the respective partners. CSOs, particularly in rural areas and less developed parts of the country, often have superior project development and writing skills, as well as greater experience in project management than public administrations. For their part, municipal authorities have greater access than CSOs to the matching funds (10-20%) required for all EC grant application. In this way, wherever such social partnerships are formed, CSOs often perform a leading or even leadership role in the design and implementation of municipal social projects.

As a sector, civil society is integrated and provided collective representation by the *The Federation of Nongovernmental Organizations of Serbia* (FeNS), a nationwide network of CSOs from over 120 municipalities covering all fields of civil society activity.⁹ FeNS was founded in 2003 as a platform for promoting civil society values and to influence decision-makers and highlight social issues. While it is recognised by government as the most important point of contact with civil society, it has had only moderate success in influencing government policy making. It is currently in the process of reconstruction in an effort to be more efficient and adapted to the needs for a more direct dialogue both with Serbian government and EU institutions.

Otherwise, civil society is poorly networked. Beyond the obvious potential advantages to fundraising to be gained from project-based partnerships, CSOs are reluctant to cooperate and there is insufficient communication and exchange of ideas, information and initiatives among CSOs.

There are a number of prominent sector and activity-specific networks, such as two national women's networks of SOS hotlines for women and children victims of violence, and the women's peace network, respectively.¹⁰ However, in total, there are very few functional networks at either the national or local levels.

⁹ There are 120 municipalities and 23 cities in Serbia (not counting the territory of Kosovo).

¹⁰ The women's peace network is a long-standing initiative established by NGO, Women in Black and comprises both CSOs and individuals from across Serbia. The network covers at least 15 different towns and focuses on practical peace building activities, such as workshops on a variety of issues pertaining to peace, antimilitarism, responsibility, dealing with the past, etc. This is supplemented with less frequent street actions and advocacy campaigns – such as a campaign for conscientious objection (CO) which collected over 30,000 signatures for a parliamentary bill on CO.

Single-issue national-level coalitions, usually in fields related to human rights, gender and minority rights, formed to conduct advocacy campaigns in relation to national legislation and social policy, have achieved prominence and some success. Examples of such high profile coalitions in the past few years include:

- Declaration on Srebrenica (2005);
- Coalition for Secular State against the Draft Law on Churches and Religious Communities (2006);
- Initiative to boycott (or Active NO) the referendum for the new Constitution of the Republic of Serbia (2006);
- Pre-election campaigns GOTV;
- Comments and amendments to laws (Bill to Pass a Law Annulling the Law on the Rights of Detainees of the International Criminal Tribunal and Members of their Families (2004);
- Coalition Against Discrimination (Draft Anti-Discrimination Law) (2005), 8 NGOs working in human rights;
- Draft Law on Gender Equality (2005); Draft Law on Churches and Religious Communities (2006);
- National Coalition for Decentralisation (2006), comprising 64 CSOs from 24 municipalities;
- Access to Information Law; Law on Associations; Law on Foundations and Endowments; Roma issues, conscientious objection.

CSO – state and government relationships

This area is described in detail in sections 1.3 and 1.4

2.6 Material and financial stability and resilience

A large majority of CSOs in Serbia are unable to finance their organisations adequately, and overcoming financial instability and lack of sustainability are the biggest challenges facing CSOs and the sector more generally. In the 2008 USAID NGO sustainability index, financial viability of Serbian civil society is adjudged to be the lowest of all the countries in the Western Balkan region by some considerable margin. Another survey of CSOs, conducted in 2009, found that only 56% of all CSOs currently active in Serbia would secure funding for their projected budget.

Major factors behind this precarious situation are the continued inadequacy of state funding available, exacerbated in 2009 by wholesale cuts to the National Budget as a result of the worldwide recession, and the poor financial framework in which CSOs work. On the other hand, CSOs have done little to adapt to the changing donor environment and the reduced availability of international resources. In addition, civil society in Serbia is conspicuous in lacking almost any CSOs which are driven by their membership or local constituency, whose support would provide the key to long-term financial sustainability in a world without external donors.

The growing importance of EU funds to the financing of civil society (and development in Serbia, more generally) has raised unrealistic expectations among CSOs regarding both the amounts of funding that will be eventually channelled to CSOs and the extent of access available to these funds. The technical requirements and the conditions for co-financing attached to EC funding are beyond the capacities of all but a few of the larger, more well developed NGOs, effectively contributing to a two-tier environment of funding opportunities.

3. CIVIL SOCIETY MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENTS, IMPACTS AND CHALLENGES

3.1 Milestone achievements and impacts in the country

Democratic change

The fall from power of Slobodan Milosevic in October 2000 was achieved after a concerted campaign of strategic non-violent action, which depended on a broad coalition of opposition political parties, NGOs, media and trades unions. Peaceful regime change and the transition to genuine democracy could not have been achieved without the intensive and long-standing resistance to Milosevic's autocracy by CSOs promoting human rights, democracy, non-violence and peace building.

Human rights and social policy legislation

Despite civil society's limited access to the policy-making process, CSO advocacy has been instrumental in creating the momentum in government in for the creation of a body of law which protects basic human rights and promotes the interests of minorities and the vulnerable:

- Creation of comprehensive and practical legal measures against domestic violence in the Criminal Code and the Law on Family Relations, in 2002, as a direct result of CSOs and women legal experts
- Anti-Discrimination Law, March 2009, in harmony with the EU acquis. The law is a product of lengthy collaboration between CSOs and the government and a broad public campaign in favour of its adoption, which resulted in an acceptable compromise with an initially sceptical Parliament
- Law on Persons with Disabilities and related supplementary regulations, such as Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities,
- Law on Use of Serbian Sign Language, was achieved with substantive participation of CSOs representing PWDs.
- Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance;
- Anti-Corruption Law

CSOs as social service providers

CSOs working at the local level are recognised as having an important and legitimate role in providing services in the community to persons with disability, the elderly, children at risk, delinquents, people with substance dependency, Roma, women victims of violence, and people living with HIV/AIDS. CSOs' part in the delivery of social services is cemented in the Strategy of Social Reform in Serbia.

3.2 Shortfalls in CSO performance

Monitoring governance and democratic process

There is an absence of CSO activity in the oversight of public administration and the work of parliamentarians and local assemblies. This is an important gap in civil society performance. There are roles to be filled in monitoring the political process at national, provincial and local level to ensure proper democratic process, in providing citizens' watch dogs of the correct implementation of laws and the application of standards in service delivery, particularly at the local level, as well as

overseeing the public administration budgetary process, the proper allocation of public resources and activities in the fight against corruption.

Economic development

With notable exceptions, mainly in the field of rural development and agriculture, CSOs are rarely active in the fields of economic development, working with the unemployed and fighting unemployment, promoting better livelihoods, and living standards, as well as providing specialist (qualified) health services. These all figure high on citizens' lists of priorities.

Participation in the process of European integration

Declaratively, civil society in Serbia is clearly and unequivocally in support of the EU accession process. However, while leading national NGOs, such as Civic Initiatives (*Gradjanske inicijative*), the Centre for Democracy Foundation and the Citizen's Pact for South Eastern Europe, are active in informing the public and generating debate on European integration, the vast majority of CSOs takes an essentially passive stance to the process, is poorly informed and is doing little or nothing to raise the public's low level of awareness and understanding of the EU, its functions and mechanisms.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Summary of strategic issues of relevance to the project

- Despite the formal commitment of Serbian civil society to EU integration, CSOs have limited information and real understanding of what the EU is, how it works and what the process of European integration and eventual membership will mean for Serbian society. A core principle of the project's implementation should be to take action to address this gap, while also conveying the message that "the process of EC accession is not in itself an instant solution to Serbia's problems, but rather an opportunity for us to take greater responsibility for our own problems."
- The uneven development of civil society in Serbia in all its aspects including, geographic dispersion, internal capacities, access to resources and, programme effectiveness and impact on the community, raises the question of where best to target project implementation. Should the project aim to maximise impact at the central level in areas of national policy and strategy making, by concentrating on the few large, fully professionalized NGOs, located mostly in Belgrade, and already equipped with advocacy and policy dialogue capabilities, or should the focus be on the diversity of smaller organisations that operate in smaller towns and rural areas? Those at the centre are often already the beneficiaries of IPA programmes, while those in the regions more commonly struggle to access financial and other forms of assistance. Support to these regional CSOs could potentially enable them to increase their influence on local authorities and to bring about direct change in the lives of local citizens and their perceptions of the democratic process.
- The ongoing decentralization of public administration, although fitful and slow, provides a policy framework to the greater development of local resources and local responsibility in within public administration, which will not be achieved without further strengthening of the CSO infrastructure at the local level. For these reasons, we recommend the project in Serbia adopts a focus on support to local-level CSOs.
- Organisational and technical capacity-building needs at the local-level are diverse, complex, very great in number and present among the vast majority of local-level CSOs. NGO support

organisations are very few in number outside Belgrade and there are few if any capacity-building programmes being implemented. In order to spend project funds efficiently and to maximise effect in terms of sustainable organisation change and development, the training provided should be targeted at individual CSOs and be tailored to their needs and, wherever possible, delivered within the framework of an organisational “package” of assistance with clearly defined organisational and programmatic objectives. Candidates should be selected by an open call for applications, training should focus on practical demonstrations and exercises, and should be followed up by mentoring and support in the implementation of newly learned skills.

- Cooperation between the national government and civil society in Serbia is undergoing a process of positive change, but is conducted without institutional structures and a policy framework. There is a political commitment to establish a Government Office for Cooperation with Civil Society. The project should ensure that existing cooperation is further supported and support is lent to government and civil society in the early establishment of the Office, as well as dialogue and consultation towards achieving a national strategy or other policy document for promoting this relationship and the development of civil society.

4.2 Needs assessment conclusions

Civil society environment

- Implementation of a new, modern Law on Associations governing CSO operations is underway, which will go a long way to providing an enabling legal framework. Time is needed for CSOs to acquaint themselves fully with the new Law on Associations and adapt their practices.
- Financial regulations and the tax measures relevant to CSOs constrain not-for-profit economic activities and provide restricted incentives for charitable giving for a small number of fuzzily defined purposes, which are of limited application for many CSOs.
- International funding sources collectively remain the most important means of financing CSO activities, but recent times have seen a marked reduction in donor activity.
- Government support for civil society has grown considerably in recent years. This support is rarely disbursed within a planned programme according to clear, transparent guidelines and qualitative criteria. For this reason, accessing government funds remains an unpredictable challenge.
- There is no institutional or policy framework for mediating relations between government and civil society, although there is a political commitment from the present government to establish a Government Office for Cooperation with Civil Society. Cooperation between government is an *ad hoc* process, undertaken by individual ministries on a case-by-case basis, and is often superficially carried out at the behest of foreign donors.
- Civil society is poorly understood and poorly supported by the general public. For many ordinary people, CSOs lack transparency and accountability, and do not cater for their interests and needs. Among more conservative circles, CSOs are often perceived as being anti-government, foreign-serving and even anti-Serbian.

CSO organisational capacities

- Civil society in Serbia is very unevenly developed. CSOs are concentrated in Belgrade and the main provincial urban centres; rural areas are poorly served by CSOs. Countrywide, civil society retains a traditional focus on social and community services and charitable activities. These are undertaken by small, semi-voluntary organisations, possessing limited capacities. A majority of CSOs are under-funded and financially unstable. There is a small elite of fully professional NGOs working at the centre, usually engaged in capacity building, advocacy and policy-making activities.
- Recruiting and retaining sufficient numbers of qualified human resources is a major constraint for many CSOs. Inadequate financial resources are the key determining factor.
- Serbian CSOs rarely carry out strategic planning. Funding insecurity and project dependency militates against effective planning, often leading to “mission creep” and consequent loss of focus and strategic orientation.
- Despite the presence of a large national CSO network, FeNS, providing leadership and representation to the sector, there are very few functioning CSO networks. CSOs communicate poorly with each other and are consistently reluctant to enter into non-instrumental partnerships and coalitions based on short-term projects.
- Local level and community-based CSOs have rarely succeeded in building constituency relations, owing to poor communication and facilitation skills. Little time is spent by CSOs in promoting their work, civil society and its achievements. Very few CSOs are member or community-driven, and are thus deprived of a potential valuable source of material support.
- Fundraising skills, except within the larger, professional NGOs, are of a low order, as too are CSO capacities to absorb and management funding. This is particularly the case regarding EU programmes, owing to the complexity of the application procedure and the conditions of co-financing.
- Familiarity with, and understanding among CSOs of EU Systems, values, procedures and operational methodologies is still very low (reflecting the situation among the general public).

4.3 Recommendations for the regional project work plan

- Support regional dialogue within civil society on themes of common interest and experience; for example Civil Society Anti-Corruption Agenda – country experiences, institutional processes, monitoring, CSO advocacy campaigns, etc;
- Bring together selected leading professional CSOs and CSO leaders from all IPA countries for joint training, facilitation, dialogue and practical activities to build capacities for policy development and research activities;
- Support the work of, and provide capacity building to existing regional networks for CSO development;
- Initiate a regional CSO dialogue to promote a unified regional platform for CSO policy and activities within the framework of the EU accession process (and building on the previous work done by IPA country CSOs in Ljubljana, April 2008 and Zadar, September 2008);
- Establish regular exchange of information between project countries and a common set of practices of the TA Desk Teams in the area of monitoring and support to IPA projects.

4.4 Recommendations for country specific work plan

Civil society environment

- Support the implementation of the new Law on Associations, by providing information and technical assistance to CSOs on its provisions. Support civil society in its efforts with the government to finalise the texts and introduce the new Law on Volunteering, and the Law on Funds and Foundations, and provide further support to advance the drafting and introduction of relevant new tax regulations which are planned for the near future;
- Create partnership with central government and provide support for and otherwise promote, in cooperation with civil society, the Government Office for Cooperation with Civil Society;
- Support civil society, in cooperation with central government, to initiate a process of defining a National Strategy for Development of the Civil Society Sector in Serbia.
- Establish partnership with relevant public and governmental institutions at the local level to provide support for processes aiming to strengthen citizens' initiatives and local participatory mechanisms. This should include facilitation of the establishment, with civil society, of mechanisms such as, public budgetary hearings, or commissions securing equal access to budget resources for CSO projects.
- Disseminate information to CSOs and the general public regarding the EU, its institutions and functions, as well its values and development objectives and policies.
- Create a functional and up-to-date CSO database of CSOs in Serbia, building upon existing databases. Attempts should be made to construct a mechanism with suitable incentives for CSOs to take the responsibility of updating their entries on a regular basis

CSO organisational capacities

With an express focus on local, grassroots CSOs working in smaller cities and rural, less-developed areas of the country, with the overall aim of increasing social capital within individual communities, mutual trust between the civil and public sector, and cooperation and joint responsibility of all local stakeholders in the process of democratic development:

- Provide training and guidance to CSOS for undertaking advocacy campaigns and engaging in policy dialogues, while facilitating communication between local administrations and local civil society in order to create institutional mechanisms for citizens participation at the local level.
- Assist CSOs to undertake public relations campaigns to promote themselves and their services, draw attention to civil society and its best practices regarding CSO services and their role democratic development on the national and local level.
- Provide training and other capacity support to CSOs to enable them monitor the work of public administrations and local assemblies, as well as carry out watch dog activities.
- Supply training and mentoring of CSOs in fundraising from various sources, including the EU funds, state and local budget funds, business and private sources. Special attention should be paid to the technical requirements for accessing EU funds.
- Provide facilitation and consultancy support to CSOs to assist them to communicate better with their memberships and constituencies, respond better to community needs and interests and raise constituency participation in CSOs' planning and activities.

Annex 1 Acronyms and abbreviations used in the text

ASP	Active Server Page
BCIF	Balkan Community Initiatives Fund
CARDS	Community Assistance for Reconstruction Development and Stabilisation
CDA	Community Development Agency
CESID	Centre for Free Elections and Democracy
CLDS	Centre for Liberal-Democratic Studies
CRDA	Community Revitalization through Democratic Action project
CRNPS	Centre for the Development of the Non-Profit Sector
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EAR	European Agency for Reconstruction
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FeNS	Federation of Serbian Non-governmental Organisations
FRNPS	Fund for the Development of the Non-Profit Sector in Vojvodina
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PWD	Person With Disability
REC	Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
SEIO	Serbian Office for European Integration
SIF	Social Innovation Fund
SIPU	Swedish Institute for Public Administration
TACSO	Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Annex 2 Research methodology

The research for this study commenced with a comprehensive desk study of all the relevant contextual information, including previous civil society mappings and assessments, evaluations of major civil society-run development programs, situation analyses, policy documents and other literature related to civil society in Serbia. This study confirmed the need for a comprehensive, updated CSO needs assessment for Serbia.

Primary data for the study was provided by a participatory consultative process conducted through individual interviews and focus group discussions. Issues for discussion in this process were identified from the initial desk study.

A total of 21 individual interviews were held with representatives of prominent CSO, government departments and public institutions, donor organizations and development agencies. (see Annex 4 for a full list of participants in the consultation process).

Three focus group discussions were carried out with representatives of CSOs on the topic, “How to strengthen civil society in order to contribute to Serbia democratisation processes”. All three sessions were held outside of the capital in order to gather the views of CSOs in the northern, central and southern parts of the country. Participation in the focus groups was invited from CSOs dealing with civil society development, community development, minority rights and youth.

Final inputs to the needs assessment were made by members of the project’s Local Advisory Group.

Annex 3 CSO databases in Serbia

There are a number of CSO databases in use in Serbia, but most of them are not up-to-date and often they are inaccessible online.

CRNPS (Centre for the Development of the Non-Profit Sector)

CRNPS holds the largest CSO database¹¹ in Serbia, containing around 2,200 active entries. The database contains a wide set of data on each organization, including contact details, main activities, territory of operation, registration details, number of employees, current projects and initiatives, membership of networks, and publications issued.

The database is an ASP application, thus allowing multi search criteria to be used. It is checked for accuracy several times a year, by contacting all organisations by email and deleting those with invalid addresses. It is updated continuously, dependent on CSOs sending in new data.

The CRNPS database largely corresponds to the specifications established for developing a database within the scope of this project, as set down in the project technical proposal (Section 3.5.3).

FeNS (Federation of Serbian Non-governmental Organisations)

The FeNS¹² database contains information on around 550 NGOs / CSOs. It provides information concerning organisation mission, vision and field of work.

BCIF (Balkan Community Initiatives Fund)

The BCIF CSO Project Ideas database¹³ was created with the support of the Deputy Prime Minister's team for the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy. The idea behind the database was to provide a link between CSO Projects in need of funding and private businesses willing to provide them with assistance.

The database contains 118 CSO profiles, outlining up to two specific planned projects or activities per organization. The database was created in March 2008. It was not updated during 2009 due to lack of funds.

Others

A number of databases provide links to potential donors for CSO activities: e.g. Civic Initiatives (nationwide) FRNPS - Fund for the Development of the Non-Profit Sector in Vojvodina (local Vojvodina-based) FRNPS also has its own local CSO database, with around 650 separate entries.

A number of databases are dedicated to particular sub-sections of the CSO community, such as the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization's Resource Centre for People with Disabilities (more a series of lists than a database as it does not contain search properties), or the Alliance of the Roma Population Associations.

¹¹ <http://www.crnps.org.rs/direktorijum/pretraga.asp>

¹² <http://www.fens.org.rs/clanice.htm>

¹³ <http://www.prsp.sr.gov.yu/grupe/BCIF.swf>

Annex 4 List of organisations consulted

CSOs Belgrade

<i>Name of organization</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Tel/Mob</i>
Civic Initiatives	1.Miljenko Dereta 2.Dubravka Velat	Director Deputy Director	+381 63 264 875 +381 63 264 876
Group 484	3.Zorica Zivadinovic	Program Coordinator	+381 64 982 3935
Center for the Development of the Non Profit Sector - CRNPS	4.Jasna Filipovic	Director	+381 63 317 521
Balkan Community Initiatives Fund - BCIF	5. Aleksandra Vesic Antic	Director	+381 63 217 843
European Movement in Serbia	6. Maja Bobic 7.Dragana Aleksandric	General Secretary Deputy General Secretary	+381 64 2162 235 +381 64 2198 386

CSOs Novi Sad

<i>Name of organization</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>	<i>Tel/Mob</i>
Kula Municipality Youth	8.Srdjan Manojlovic	+381 64 169 2579
Centre for Youth Work	9.Milisav Milinkovic	+381 64 146 8181
Independent Youth Organization of Ruma	10.Marko Nagl 11.Danijela Glusac	+381 64 143 6152 +381 64 170 1923
Volunteer Center of Vojvodina	12.Dragana Zec 13.Danijela Anastasov	+381 64 326 1648 +381 64 234 1748
Youth Group of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights	14.Irena Vilotic	+381 62 899 6315
Paad Centar	15.Sasa Dujin	+381 63 348 430

CSOs Niš

<i>Name of organization</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>	<i>Tel/Mob</i>
PROTECTA – Centre for the Development of Civil Society	16.Dejan Milosevic	+381 65 805 5656
Association of Roma Women - OSVIT	17.Ana Sacipovic 18.Irena Mahmudovic	+381 64 2036 147 +381 60 030 8982
Board for Civic Initiatives	19.Velibor Petkovic	+381 18 521 424
Nis Centre for Human Rights	20.Pavlina Mihajlenko 21. Lidija Vučkovic	+381 64 833 0112

CSOs Kragujevac

<i>Name of organization</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>	<i>Tel/Mob</i>
Sunce	22.Marija Stojadinovic 23.Sladjana Milosevic	+381 34 362 700 +381 64 220 5577
Tango	24.Ivan Mihailovic	+381 63 335 877
Millennium	25.Vladimir Paunovic	+381 63 620 697
Iz Kruga	26.Olivera Ilic	+381 65 340 4001

Government institutions

<i>Name of organization</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Tel/Mob</i>
Office for European Integrations of the Government of Serbia	27.Milica Markovic Tomic	Advisor	+381 11 3061 151
Ministry of Finance	28.Jelena Pajovic	Advisor	+381 11 3042 784
Team for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction, Government of Serbia	29.Ivana Cirkovic	Deputy Team Manager	+381 63 886 8123

Donors, technical assistance / development organisations

<i>Name of organization</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Tel/Mob</i>
Social Innovation Fund	30.Aleksandra Calosevic	Director	+381 11 3242 262
UNDP	31.Irma Lutovac	Project Officer	+381 63 814 1167
USAID	32.Dragana Stevanovic	Project Manager	+381 65 356 2480
GOPA Consultants	33.Mihaela Jansa 34.Ognjan Lipovski	Consultants	+381 63 260 639 +381 63 736 6194
DFID	35.Simon Narbeth 36.Daliborka Petrovic	Adviser Project Manager	+44(0)7990774666 +381 11 306 0933
EC Delegation	37. Pierre Dybman 38.Svetlana Djukić	Head of Operation	011 30 83 201

Individuals: trainers and consultants

<i>Names</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Tel/Mob</i>
39.Anna Bu	Trainer in NGO development	0691242491
40.Ivana Koprivica	Trainer in NGO development	063523219
41.Branka Pavlović	Consultant in local development	0638367735
42.Svetlana Olenik	Trainer	0691153268
43. Florijan Hauser	Consultant with Ministry of Finance	06494153337
44.Goran Bašić	Ombudsman office deputy	0113114437
45. Nataša Milenković	Evaluator	063688277
46. Ivanka Jovanovic	Trainer	063552299

Annex 5 References

- Anti -Corruption Council (2009) Annual Report for 2008,
available at <<http://www.antikorupcija-savet.sr.gov.yu/list.jsp?type=izvestaj>>
- Milojevic, Z. (2006) Civil Society in Serbia Suppressed During the 1990s – Gaining Legitimacy, and Recognition after 2000, Civicus Civil Society Index Report, ARGUMENT in collaboration with CDNPS, Belgrade
- Civic Initiatives (2009) Citizen Participation in the drafting and implementation laws and other public policies, Belgrade
- Civic Initiatives (2009) Civil Society in Serbia, working paper, Belgrade, June 2009
- Civic Initiatives (2009) Country briefing paper, Conference “Strengthening the triangle CSOs- National Governments-European Commission: Reinforcing the Europe-wide Civil Society and Building Partnership,” 19-20 October 2009, Zadar
- CRNPS (2008) Bulletin of the Centre for the Development of the Non-Profit Sector, 31 October 2008, Belgrade
- EC (2009) Serbia 2009 Progress Report, Brussels
- EU (2008), Serbia: Role of Civil Society; Economic- Social Committee of the EU, Brussels, June 2008
- Golubovic, D. & Andjelkovic, B. (undated) Institutional Mechanisms for Cooperation between Government and Civil Society in Serbia, available at
<<http://www.gradjanske.org/admin/download/files/cms/attach?id=187>>
- Republic of Serbia (2009) Law on Associations (Serbian language)
available at < <http://www.cedas.org.rs/documents/Zakon%20o%20udruzenjima.pdf>>
- Republic of Serbia (2002) Enterprise Profit Tax Law (English language), Službeni glasnik 25/01 & 80/02, 26 November 2002
- Republic of Serbia (2004) Value Added Tax Law (English language), Službeni glasnik, 84/2004 – July 24, 2004, & 86/2004, of July 30, 2004.
- SIGMA (2008) Policy Development and Coordination, Report of the European Commission for Serbia, May 2008.
- Tibbett, S. (2009) Towards a Peoples’ Multilateralism: The United Nations, Development Networks and Civil Society, a synthesis and literature review paper; 15 May 2009, New York: UNDP, available at
<http://www.undp.org/partners/civil_society/publications/Towards_A_Peoples_Multilateralism_Steve_Tibbett_2009.doc>
- USAID (2009) Serbia: 2008 USAID Sustainability Index for Central and South Eastern Europe and Eurasia, 12 edition, June 2008

Internet resources

- Delegation of the European Commission in Serbia - <http://www.delscg.ec.europa.eu>
- Serbian Business Registers Agency - <http://www.apr.gov.rs/>
- Centre for the Development of the Non-Profit Sector - <http://www.crnps.org.rs>
- Federation of Serbian Non-governmental Organisations - <http://www.fens.org.rs/clanice.htm>
- PRSP Office of the Government of Serbia - <http://www.prsp.sr.gov.yu/>
- Balkan Community Initiatives Fund - <http://www.bcif.org>