



EU TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS
IN THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

COUNTRY CONSULTATION
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
22 FEBRUARY 2021

**Guidelines for EU Support
to Civil Society in the
Enlargement region, 2021-2027**





SHORT REPORT

BACKGROUND

Within the framework of the EU-funded Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organizations in Western Balkans and Turkey (EU TACSO 3) project the team facilitated public consultations for **Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Region for the period 2021-2027** that were organised in Bosnia and Herzegovina on Monday, 22 February, 2021. The consultation concerns the revision and updating of the Guidelines that already exist and have been used during the period 2014 - 2020.

The Guidelines explain how the EU will support civil society in the region during the period of 2021 - 2027, in particular through its Civil Society Facility. They are aimed at three audiences:

- For **EU staff**: to assist them in preparing and implementing EU support to civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey; in monitoring the effectiveness of the support; and in analysing the evolution of the IPA beneficiary state of affairs concerning civil society;
- For **policy-makers and administrators in the Western Balkans and Turkey**: to understand the standards of DG NEAR in terms of IPA beneficiaries' own support to civil society in the context of the EU enlargement – notably in terms of the enabling environment for stimulating participatory democracy and civil society involvement in public-policy making and the EU integration process;
- For **civil society in the region**: to know the standards towards which DG NEAR is working in terms of their capacity, effectiveness, resilience, independence and accountability.

The Guidelines, and in particular their results framework, provide concrete objectives, targets, indicators and benchmark in support of these efforts.

The revision of the Guidelines has been carried out in a participatory way. In December 2020, TACSO issued a call for written inputs for the revision from civil society organisations. In January 2020, a regional consultation for civil society and public authorities took place in Skopje. Consultations were now being organised in each IPA beneficiary, to present and discuss the Guidelines with civil society organisations, public institutions, donors and others, with a view to receiving feedback for their finalisation. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was held on-line and while the official language of the event was English the simultaneous translation to Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian language were provided.

The event aimed to present the Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Region for the period 2021-2027 and to enable public audience to provide feedback, comments and raise questions. Public consultations remain open and there is still a possibility to send comments in writing by Friday, 12 March 2021.

A Call for Participation was launched on 12 February to invite CSOs in BiH to register and participate in the consultation event. As a result, 38 CSOs registered. Eleven (11) public institutions representatives and eight (8) donors' representatives were invited by direct invitation. In total, 51 representatives of CSOs, public institutions, donors and other stakeholders operating in BiH have confirmed participation, while forty-six (46) representatives attended in full or in part (See detailed list in Annex 2: List of participants).



INTRODUCTION SESSION

In the beginning, **Tanja Hafner Ademi, EU TACSO 3 Team Leader**, provided information about the purpose of the event. She addressed the audience by informing the participants that this meeting was organised by the EU TACSO 3 project and the Delegation of EU to BiH in the framework of the consultation on the Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Region for the period 2021-2027. She explained the structure of the event and presented the agenda of the event (See details in Annex 1: Agenda). Katerina Boncheva, EU TACSO 3 Event Manager explained the technical details for the use of translation and other basic rules to enable effective participation and discussion. Ms Hafner Ademi also introduced EU TACSO 3 Country Coordinator in BiH and explained that she will moderate the discussion part of the event.

Liselotte Isaksson, Head of Section, Western Balkans Regional Cooperation and Programmes Civil Society and Social Inclusion (D.5), DG NEAR, emphasized the importance of the Guidelines and the development and prospect of the civil society as key priority for the EU. Civil society is considered an important actor that actively promotes and supports the fundamental rights that are at the heart of the EU, such as freedom of expression, rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights including minority rights. Active civil society represents the views and aspirations of the citizens and holds the institutions accountable. In addition, she talked about the important role civil society plays in service provision to the communities and the recent very specific role of supporting the communities in emergencies. CSOs are important partners also in proposing a vision for the society and in testing and promoting innovative solutions to sustainable development challenges. With regard to the Enlargement process, she emphasized the importance of civil society in deepening the understanding of citizens about the reforms that are needed to qualify for membership. EU needs CSOs that are capable, professional, and resilient, but also public institutions that will put in place the enabling environment for civil society. In addition, there should also be good systems to facilitate the cooperation and exchange between civil society and government. She explained that the Civil Society Facility (CSF) was established since 2009 with the role to channel both the bilateral support such as that to Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the support at the regional level. In the previous period, approximately 3% of the budget of IPA I and II was allocated to civil society whereas the average annual amount is around 80 million EUR. This orientation of EU to support civil society will remain at the same level in the future period through IPA III. She reflected on the importance of the Guidelines in this new financing period 2021 – 2027 and the need to revise them in a participatory manner and with active participation and understanding of all stakeholders such as public institutions and civil society. She emphasized the three-fold purpose of the Guidelines. First for the EU to plan, monitor and analyze the support provided to civil society, secondly, to the policy makers and public officials to understand the standards and expectations that the EU has in terms of an enabling environment for civil society and the involvement of the civil society in public policy making. Additionally, the Guidelines are seen as assisting in the development of the strategies for cooperation between governments and civil society. The third purpose of the Guidelines is for the CSOs in order to know the standards towards which they should work in terms of their own capacities. She shortly reflected on the structure and the results framework that also includes indicators to measure the progress and that are anchored in the international standards and legal framework.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Session 1: EU Civil Society Guidelines for the Enlargement Region, 2021-2027, Presentation of the draft framework

In December 2020, the first version of Guidelines result framework was published and all organisations were invited to participate and provide their feedback. Just recently, as of this morning, DG NEAR made



available the last version of the Guidelines together with the previously published result framework, which is available on the EU TACSO 3 website and the link was provided to participants in chat. This is a very important document, as it presents the EU's effort to have a more strategic guide and a road map to support CSOs in the Enlargement region. The consultation process is organised so that everybody can provide contributions.

Hafner Ademi explained the role of EU TACSO 3 in revision of the Guidelines which was similar to what had been developed for previous Guidelines. She presented the overall framework, aims and purpose, the structure of Guidelines which has two parts, introduction and the result framework. Result framework includes specific objective, indicators and regional standards/benchmarks, sources of verification etc.. The result framework includes (specific) objectives against, which the success is to be measured in each IPA Beneficiary.

Emina Nuredinoska, EU TACSO 3 P2P Manager then presented the first two areas of the result framework: conducive environment and CSO and IPA Beneficiary authorities/institution relations. She presented the specific objectives, indicators and relevant regional benchmarks. Presentation of third area, the CSO resilience and capacity included presentation of the new conceptualization and approach including focus on capable, transparent and accountable CSOs, resource based CSOs, strategically led and supported CSOs. Finally, the methodology for monitoring is based on the current approach. Importance of triangulation and validation of findings was stressed.

Session 2: Discussion

In this session, Nina Brankovic, EU TACSO 3 Country Coordinator for BiH, as the moderator of this part of the event, asked participants to present their questions in writing in the Chat orally by raising their hand. All questions and comments made by different participants are presented below in consecutive order:

Dragana Dardic, Helsinki Citizen Assembly Banja Luka

Ms Dardic pointed out that Gender Action Plan 3 should be included into the referenced Benchmarks. She also explained that it is important to include protection of human rights defenders as a reference as well. It is also important to use diversification of CSOs in terms of funding received and, therefore, to be clear what type and kind of CSOs received funds from public funding resources.

Short comments were offered. Liselotte Isaksson stressed that a lot of progress has been made to define indicators that would be available and collected in all IPA beneficiaries. Tanja Hafner Ademi added information on how indicators were defined and what elements they include. Gender indicators have been included so far only to the extent that it is possible to obtain data for them.

Aida Daguda, CPCD/ Council of Ministers BiH, Advisory Body of the Council of Ministers of BiH for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations, Chair (representative of civil society)

Different representatives of CSO suggested some improvements of indicators and CPCD provided its comments in writing in January. Additionally, it was suggested that some indicators should be merged while others should be divided to provide more concise and accurate measurement of the successful implementation of the result framework. For example, she pointed out that indicators on freedom of assembly and association and the freedom of expression should be divided. She also added that indicators mainly focus on the legal environment, while it would be beneficial to focus on policy environment as well.

Tanja Hafner Ademi informed those at the event that all comments received will be processed by experts once the consultation process is finalised, based on which DG NEAR will finalize the Guidelines.



The comments received by CPCD and other CSOs so far will be useful for the improvement of the framework. EU TACSO 3 is looking forward to working with the newly established Council for Civil Society at the Councils of Ministers BiH.

Samir Omerefendic, UNDP/ReLOaD

He explained that they are aware of different kinds of frameworks and was interested to see if there will be a bit more pressure on the government to take more responsibility. Also, ReLOaD will look at the new working version of the Guidelines and submit written comments.

In response Liselotte Isaksson pointed out that the work with government is a continuous process and is also part of the support to Guidelines implementation.

Dusko Vucic, Resource Center BiH

He highlighted that they appreciate the Guidelines and are willing to provide support to the translation of the Guidelines so that interested audiences in BiH can participate and provide comments. They can also offer to put the translated version of the Guidelines on their website.

CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

In the last session, it was concluded that the consultation event was useful in exchanging constructive feedback from different actors. After the consultation event, participants were invited to submit written contributions to EU TACSO 3 at consultations@tacso.eu. Organizations were informed that contributions can be in form of a comment and suggestion. Written contributions could be submitted both in English, Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian language by Friday, 12 March, 2021. Consultation information is available on the EU TACSO 3 website www.tacso.eu.

Ms Hafner Ademi explained at the final session the finalisation of the Guidelines result framework and work on the methodology and operationalization will be done in March. She also added that the regional event on the final Guidelines document would be held in April 2021. After that it is expected that the promotion of the document be organised.



Annex 1. Agenda

GUIDELINES FOR EU SUPPORT TO CIVIL SOCIETY IN ENLARGEMENT REGION FOR THE PERIOD 2021-2027 COUNTRY CONSULTATIONS

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
22 FEBRUARY, 2021

On-line public consultation process
AGENDA

Monday, 22. 02. 2021

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|---------------|---|
| 14:00 – 14:15 | Introduction, objectives of the process <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liselotte Isaksson, Head of Section, Western Balkans Regional Cooperation and Programmes - Civil Society and Social Inclusion (D.5), DG NEAR• Vladimir Pandurevic, Task Manager for Civil Society, Delegation of the EU to Bosnia and Herzegovina• Tanja Hafner Ademi, Team Leader, EU TACSO 3 |
| 14:15 – 14:45 | EU Civil Society Guidelines for the Enlargement Region, 2021-2027 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of the draft framework• Q&A |
| 14:45 – 16:15 | Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderated by Nina Brankovic, Country Coordinator for Bosnia and Herzegovina, EU TACSO 3 |
| 16:15 – 16:30 | Conclusions & next steps |



Annex 2: List of participants

No.	Name	Surname	Organization
1	Dejan	Rađen	PRONI Centar za omladinski razvoj
2	Dusko	Vucic	ACED - Agencija za saradnju, edukaciju i razvoj
3	Ivica	Sivrić	Asocijacija za ekonomski razvoj REDAH
4	Tomo	Nagradić	KUDM „Bosiljak" Derventa
5	Dragana	Dardic	Helsinski parlament gradjana Banja Luka
6	Olivera	Mastikosa	Humanitarna organizacija PARTNER BANJALUKA
7	Esad	Bećirović	Centar za razvoj civilnog društva u Bosni i Hercegovini
8	Natasa	Djordjic	UG Tolerancijom protiv različitosti
9	Nedim	Alibegović	Vijeće mladih Federacije BiH
10	Lejla	Čaušević-Sučeska	Savez samostalnih sindikata BiH
11	Branka	Ivanovic	IN fondacija
12	Larisa	Kovačević	Udruženje žena Romkinja "Bolja budućnost" grada Tuzla
13	Sabina	Lizde	Fondacija CURE
14	Mirsada	Hodžić	Udruženje "Radosti druženja" roditelja djece i mladih sa poteškoćama u razvoju
15	Ferida	Mešković	Omladinski centar "Vermont"
16	Tomas	Bingas	NERDA
17	Damir	Radenković	Omladinski centar "Vermont"
18	Armina	Cerkic	Udruženje za sistemsku praksu i terapiju
19	Adis	Muhović	Centar za politike i upravljanje
20	Samir	Husić	Inicijativa za šumarstvo i okoliš - FEA
21	Tomislav	Majić	Udruženje za poduzetništvo i posao LiNK
22	Dajana	Bakić	Sarajevski otvoreni centar
23	Draženko	Budimir	ERRDO
24	Aleksandra	Tomic Cato	UFUBiH
25	Milenko	Vujinović	Udruženje za pomoć djeci i omladini sa posebnim potrebama "Sunce"
26	Tarik	Nalbantić	Inicijativa za šumarstvo i okoliš - fea
27	Anisija	Radenković	Hope and Homes for Children in BiH
28	Julijana	Petrovic	Savez za povratak izbjeglih i raseljenih Bosanske Posavine
29	Tifa	Tučić	Udruženje građana oštećenog vida Tuzla
30	Amina	Trle	Inicijativa za šumarstvo i okoliš - FEA
31	Lejla	Hukić	Inicijativa za šumarstvo i okoliš - FEA
32	Željka	Katanić	Udruženje roditelja hendikepirane djece i omladine „Leptir„Srebrenica
33	Milan	Mirić	Inicijativa i civilna akcija - ICVA
34	Selma	Džihanović-Gratz	Ministry for Justice of BIH
35	Nedim	Hamzabegovic	Government of Brcko District
36	Midhat	Džemić	Directorate For European Integration
37	Naida	Dilic	Directorate For European Integration



38	Aida	Daguda	Council of Ministers BiH, Advisory Body of the Council of Ministers of BiH for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations, Chair (representative of civil society)
39	Muamer	Hodžić	Council of Ministers BiH, Advisory Body of the Council of Ministers of BiH for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations, Vice Chair
40	Ilija	Trninić	Council of Ministers BiH, Advisory Body of the Council of Ministers of BiH for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations, Member
41	Tomislav	Majić	Council of Ministers BiH, Advisory Body of the Council of Ministers of BiH for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations, Member
42	Dusko	Vucic	NRC
43	Samir	Omerefendic	UNDP/ReLOad
44	Sanja	Bokun	UNDP/ReLOad
45	Lisa	Curman	SIDA
46	Nedim	Bukvic	SIDA