



IPA III Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2021-23, Action for Kosovo* Consultation launch

9 DECEMBER, 2020

Short report

INTRODUCTION

For the needs of the EU Office in Kosovo (EUOK), EU TACSO 3 project organized an on-line meeting to launch the consultation regarding the IPA Civil Society Facility (CSF) and Media Programme 2021–23, Action for Kosovo on Wednesday, 9 December, 2020 between 10:30 and 12:00hrs CET.

The event aimed to present the timeline of the programming process and discuss the draft outline of the Programme with civil society and media organizations as well as other stakeholders in the development of the Programme.

The specific objectives of the event were:

- To support the EUOK on the presentation of the IPA Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2021–23, Action for Kosovo;
- To support the initial comments and to inform the participants on the follow-up steps for comments & inputs in the framework of consultation on the IPA CSF and Media Programme 2021–23, Action for Kosovo;

Call for participants to take part in the launch of the consultation on the IPA CSF and Media Programme 2021–23 was published on EU TACSO 3 website and sent directly to around 230 active CSOs and media organizations in Kosovo. The event was organised on-line. Eighty-five (85) representatives of CSOs, and media organizations and other stakeholders from Kosovo applied to participate, while 49 representatives attended in full or partially (Annex 2: List of participants).

DISCUSSION

Introduction, objectives, expectations

In the beginning, Tanja Hafner Ademi, EU TACSO 3 Team Leader, as the facilitator of the event, provided information about the purpose of the event. She addressed the audience by informing the participants that this meeting was organised by EU TACSO 3 project and EUOK in the framework of the IPA Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2021–23, Action for Kosovo consultation launch.

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After the welcoming speech, Ms Hafner Ademi gave instructions about language translation. The event was held in English, but participants could use either Albanian or Serbian language translation. Also, basic rules to enable effective participation and exchange were laid out. Furthermore, the agenda of the event was presented (Annex 1: Agenda).

Session 1: IPA III CSF and Media Programme 2021-23, Action for Kosovo presentation

Dario di Benedetto, EUOK briefly presented the Programme and its set-up since 2012. He explained that CSF and the Media Programme is the instrument of the European Commission for supporting CSO actors and media organizations as direct beneficiaries of this Programme. Thus, it was understandable to get the inputs of the beneficiaries during the development process of the Programme, as early as possible, to have a draft that reflects their needs.

Furthermore, the timeline of the programming process and the timeline of the consultation for receiving inputs by the CSOs and media organizations were presented. The consultation timeframe will span over approximately four months, starting from this event up to the first week of March 2021. Thus, the main focus during the presentation was on presenting the current draft Programme and the initial ideas that it includes.

The new Programme will be an ambitious Programme with potentially 9 million EUR allocation, which is the highest financial allocation for a programme of this type in Kosovo so far. It was also explained that this Programme will cover a period of 3 years (2021-23). The draft ideas are based on several reports conducted by different actors including TACSO and the EU. During the consultation process, participants can submit ideas and contributions directly related to the draft outline or for other projects not mentioned in the draft. In March 2021, all received inputs will be summarised in one document. The result of these inputs will be presented to stakeholders during a second consultation meeting in March to get their final feedback before going to the next step of the programming process. The draft Programme outline is available in Annex 3.

Session 2: Discussion

In this session, Natasha Mazari, EU TACSO 3 Country Coordinator for Albania, as the facilitator of this part of the event, asked participants to present their questions regarding the presented draft Programme, in writing in the Chatbox or orally by raising their hand. All questions and comments made by different participants are presented below in consecutive order:

From Jehona Gjurgjeala -TOKA

- What kind of input would you like to get, what sort of level of input? The overview of the outline is well structured but very general, thus, I am asking what level of input will be useful to you? If I speak about education what level do I have to go?

Response by Dario di Benedetto, EUOK:

- Concurred that this is correct. The presentation was broad and we expect to receive input that would have to put some 'meat and bones' in the Programme. For instance, about education, we need to get your input and background to understand why the EU should support organizations that work in the education sector, what are the problems and their needs, etc.. Your input would



contribute to the rationale to justify the assistance. We need solid arguments to substantiate the assistance to a specific sector.

From Fatmir Curri – Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF)

- Is there a difference in eligibility criteria for NGOs that can apply under the projects for Sector Development (media) and the last one on Media Pluralism?
- For the Support to CS at the grassroots through FSTP we suggest for longer time actions to have longer time so minimum 30-36 months since the design of calls, evaluation, contracting takes much time so to allow more time for implementation of projects by grantees;
- Why under CSF there is also support for public administration? There is IPA money to work with public institutions and they can benefit from that money, so why they are put under the CSF programme?

Response by Dario di Benedetto, EUOK:

- Regarding the media resilience, the intention is to open calls to all type of media organizations, not only to civil society. The programme support for media last year included also media outlets. The eligibility criteria will be defined in a way that will allow for application from all types of media organizations. The idea is to support media resilience, media sector in general, public broadcasting and private media broadcasting. In such a case, the level of co-financing would not be the same for a non-profit organisation and private companies.
- I agree that sub granting requires time. There are also unforeseen circumstances that delay the implementation process. We can go even beyond 36 months. There is some limit concerning the timing of the financing decision, but this is very technical. Normally the project cannot go beyond four years. That is the time limit.
- The assistance to institutions is for more inclusive decision making with CSOs. The final aim of the EU is to support Kosovo to become its member state. This means that under certain circumstances and conditions, in the future the assistance to civil society and media will necessarily be channelled through the government. We should therefore consider any mechanism that facilitates the inclusion of civil society in decision-making as the objective and beneficiary of the assistance to the enabling environment for civil society. One of the results of the EU Civil Society Guidelines also focuses on the cooperation of government with civil society.
- We can propose different modalities to support the cooperation of civil society with the government within the Programme. The assistance given to institutions should not be seen as a gift to the institutions. We don't have the intention to provide the government with experts to fulfil the role of public officials. The purpose here is to create the conditions for CSOs to strengthen cooperation with government through the structured mechanism and to bring forward the agenda and strategies that were agreed, to create structures, i.e. Councils that facilitate the dialogue with the government. Over the last years, this type of assistance produced important results. To me, it seems important to continue the support for this process and even to expand it. However, you can propose ideas to move this support into another direction.



From Valdete Osmani - Rtk:

- Apart from CSOs and the media, can individual journalists be beneficiaries in this project? As far as I know yes, but I wanted more detailed explanations about how did you envisage the support for individuals in this project

Response by Dario di Benedetto, EUOK:

- We have been working with the media sector to support professional journalist for some years and currently, we have two projects focused on the investigative journalist. We will continue to support this sector. The modality we are using is sub-granting to third parties because we cannot hand over small grant (of 2,000 – 3,000 euros) to different journalists. We need to have one implementing partner, a CSO or a media organization with strong backgrounds and experience in the sector that could act as an intermediary to distribute grants to journalists, but also to develop their capacity through capacity building component. The intention is to continue supporting journalists, but the modality of support will be determined at a later stage, once we'll prepare the guidelines for the call for proposals. At this stage, we have just identified the main projects.

From Arber Lleshi - BONEVET:

- During the presentation, it was said that under the Sector development (sub-sectors) there is a tentative allocation of 5 million EUR. Is there any indication about the dedicated budget for each of these components, or that will be based on the quality of the received projects in each of these fields?

Response by Dario di Benedetto, EUOK:

- Proposed allocation covers all priorities mentioned under civil society development. The proposal is to use different modalities to support these priorities, such as action grants, operating grants, coalitions and networks, and financial support to the third parties. There is an indicative breakdown of this amount: 1.5 million EUR for action grants, 1 million EUR for operating grants, 1.5 million EUR for coalitions and networks, and 1 million EUR for financial support to the third parties. These are very tentative allocations that can be subject to reduction, depending on the availability of the budget.

From Behare Bajraktari – BB Green Kosovo

- I am a journalist and I mainly report on environmental issues. How is the reporting for environmental NGOs in the programme foreseen?

Response by Dario di Benedetto, EUOK:

- The environment, green economy and the initiatives that go in the direction of Commission's green deal will be certainly in the focus of EU support civil society. Currently, we have a programme that supports fact-checking and reports in the area of environmental crimes. We have funded also projects implemented by CSO that promote local activism through sub-granting in the field of environment. Also, we support the European environmental week. The intention is to continue supporting efforts of civil society in this sector.
- In terms of input for the CSF consultation, we would need background information regarding the needs of CSOs working in this sector in Kosovo. As said, this information is important information to justify the need for further assistance.



- I would like to inform you that we intend to continue consulting CSOs also for the design of a specific call for proposals.

From Anita Toçi – KOHA Group

- It is very important to know for us if registered media as the business will be eligible since we have experience but we were not qualified to apply even though we do professional journalism?

Response by Dario di Benedetto, EUOK:

- Same replay as above under Fatmir's question.

From Ekrem Bajrami – Initiative for Kosovo

- Is there going to be specifically something designed for rural area and women, especially in this time that COVID crisis has severely affected the rural area & rural population & women?

Response by Dario di Benedetto, EUOK:

- Indeed, the rural areas are most affected in general by the isolation and especially in this situation created by COVID-19 crises. People in these areas are suffering the most and the assistance of the government and the donors is more difficult to reach the population in the rural areas. Concerning this Programme, we foresee financial support to third parties especially to small municipalities and the idea is to reach out to small CSOs in rural areas. We have included gender under civil society development as sub-sector.
- I would like to inform you that the Commission approved a programme under IPA 2019 to support social protection. This programme foresees substantial support to CSO that provide social services to vulnerable groups, including women and children. It will be implemented through Save the Children and the budget for re-granting is 3 million EUR. The project implementation will start very soon at the beginning of next year. Sub-grants through a call for proposals will be provided to CSOs that provide services for vulnerable groups. The first one will be launched at the beginning of next year.
- Regarding the rural development, there is a separate Programme on Agriculture and Rural Development. This Programme foresees grants for small producers The Commission cooperates and supports the efforts of the line Ministry. During the last years, we have awarded a small grant to for rural development, but this is a very specific sector that is supported through another Programme.

From Valbona Salihu – NORMA Association

- How many applicants will be supported approximately by the programme and what will be the min and the max of a project's budget?

Response by Dario di Benedetto, EUOK:

- The amount will depend on the specific project. Based on our experience, organizations have different capacities. In the case of financial support to the third parties, we would expect one project to implement this programme and at least 70% to be distributed through grants. For operating grants based on our experience, we would expect the amount to be not more than 50.000 EUR per financial year.
- About the number, we aim to have the highest possible number of good CSOs and media organization supported. That's why we are doing the financial support to third parties. With the



current programmes of CSF 2016-17 and CSF 2018-19, we have reached out to more than 100 CSOs and media organizations plus many journalist and artists.

From Seladin Kaçaniku – NGO the Consumer:

- Media has its own audience (consumers) that is the citizen as a spectator, viewer, listener, and consumer of the Media. Since the cooperation is insufficient, how will the media and media consumers be helped to be closer to each other?
- The consumer citizen, as a taxpayer and the main generator of the budget, is a financier of public media. But, none of them has an educational show for the consumer citizen, for his cause, for his rights and obligations. Can positive changes be expected in the future?

Response by Dario di Benedetto, EUOK:

- We are aware of the importance of the information and media in a democratic state and also the importance of this sector to ensure that all citizens receive the correct information. Also, we are aware of the importance of the role of the media actors as the watchdog of the institutions together with the CSOs. In the next phase, we would like to focus on support through fact-checking projects. One of the main problems is the disinformation and fake news that circulate and it is important to counterbalance this tendency with professionalism.
- There are many examples of organizations in the Member States of these types of media projects. Thus, some of these good practices can be transferred to Kosovo in this area. This is not the only way, but it can contribute to re-establishing the trust of the audience to the media organizations and particularly in those media actors that are informing citizens and have the mandate to inform citizens and provide quality information.

From Trim Kabashi - Save the Children:

- Do you mind sharing those presentations with the group?

Response by Dario di Benedetto, EUOK:

- Yes, we'll send the outline presentation.

From Behare Bajraktari:

- Thank you very much for the presentation and the opportunity.

From Anita Toçi:

- Thank you so much for a very useful consultation session.

From Jehona Gjurgjeala –TOKA

- First input: I propose that CS Development (sub-sectors) be combined with cross-cutting. When we mention the sustainability of civil society, I do not know how much capacity development with civil society has been done so far regarding their capacities for developing their internal financial capacities. This is very important for an organization to become sustainable and autonomous;
- Second input: Financial support to third parties can be done by using different modalities. Thus, I would propose to do capacity building for CSOs for financial support to third parties especially under CS Development cross-cutting;
- Third input: For education sector are developed several policies. I propose to find practical ways on how policy decisions can be put into life, in practice to impact the teachers and the classrooms.



CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

In the last session, it was concluded that the consultation event was useful in exchanging constructive feedback from different actors and with EUOK. After the consultation launch event, participants were invited to submit written contributions to EU TACSO 3 at welcome@tacso.eu. Organizations were informed that contributions can be in form of a comment, suggestion, useful study or report etc. to draft outline of the IPA III CSF and Media Programme. Written contributions can be submitted both in English, Albanian and Serbian language by beginning of March 2021. Consultation information are available on EU TACSO 3 website www.tacso.eu.



Annex 1. Agenda

IPA III Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2021-23,

Action for Kosovo* Consultation launch

9 December, 2020

AGENDA

Wednesday, 09 December

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| 10:15 – 10:30 | Registration and entry to the Zoom meeting room |
| 10:30 – 10:40 | Introduction, objectives, expectations |
| 10:40 – 11:10 | IPA III Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2021-23, Action for Kosovo presentation
<i>Presented by Dario di Benedetto, EU Office in Kosovo (EUOK)</i> |
| 11:10 – 12:00 | Discussion
<i>Moderated by EU TACSO 3 representative</i> |
| 12:00 - 12:10 | Conclusions, next steps (on-line contributions) |

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Annex 2: List of participants

First Name	Last Name	Gender	Organization Name
Trim	Kabashi	Male	Save the Children International
Jehona	Gjurgjeala	Female	TOKA
Rinora	Gojani	Female	Balkan Green Foundation
Selatin	Kaçaniku	Male	OJQ KONSUMATORI/NGO THE CONSUMER
Dren	Puka	Male	Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF)
Valza	Kika Salihu	Female	RIT KOSOVA (A.U.K)
Shqipe	Shaqiri Islami	Female	Local Solution
Delvina	Haxhijaha	Female	Balkan Green Foundation (BGF)
Rositsa	Zaharieva	Other	UNODC
Baton	Isniqi	Male	KOSID- Kosovar Civil Society Foundation for Sustainable Development
Isuf	HALIMI	Male	European Center for Human Rights
Krenare	Rizvanolli	Female	"ABSM"- Center for professional trainings and foreign language
Erblin	Hoxha	Male	Debate Center
Muhamet	Hajrullahu	Male	Telegrafi.com
Visar	Ymeri	Male	Institute for Social Policy "Musine Kokalari"
Joanna	Hanson	Female	New Perspektiva
Anita	Toçi	Female	KOHA Group
Berna	Xhemajli	Female	Building the Balkans
Gursel	Arifi	Male	Kosovo Association Milk Producers
Adem	Lushaj	Male	Association of Independent Intellectuals
Valdete	Osmani	Female	Rtk
Bekim	Bytyqi	Male	Sharri Wildlife
Behare	Bajraktari	Female	BB GREEN KOSOVA
Ardita	Xhemajli	Female	New Social Initiative
Qerim	Ondozi	Male	Organizata ÇOHU
Faton	Morina	Male	Chamber of Mediators of the Republic of Kosovo
Annea	Hapciu	Female	Kosovalive
Mervan	Zejnullahu	Male	CIDD
Menda	Zymberi	Female	Xtrailers
Faruk	Daci	Male	Fuqizimi i Diturisë
Flaka	Bamja	Female	SharriWildLife
Nita	Qahili	Female	Galeria Qahili
Vesa	Shehu	Female	KM
Ivana	Djokic	Female	Center for Human Potentials Development



Artiola	Babuni	Female	KosovaLive
Diellza	Salihu	Female	Balkan Investigative Reporting Network Kosovo (BIRN Kosovo)
Valbona	Salihu	Female	Shoqata e Juristëve Norma
Ekrem	Bajrami	Male	Initiative for Kosova Community
Anna	Kuznetsova	Female	USAID
Fatmir	Curri	Male	Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF)
Aferdita	Pustina	Female	OSCE Mission in Kosovo
Bekim	Bajrami	Male	Initiative for Kosova Community (I.K.C.)
Linda	Llulla	Female	DokuFest
Tamara	Vucic	Female	HERC
Arber	Lleshi	Male	BONEVET
Florid	Bytyqi	Male	Community Development and empowerment
Bert	Van der Linde	Male	Forum Civil Peace Service (forumZFD)
Dorina	Glllogjani	Female	YMCA
Baton	Isnqi	Male	KOSID



Annex 3: IPA III Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2021-23, Kosovo

Objective	Priorities	Project	Tentative allocation (EUR)	IPA/ Year
Sector Development (Media)	Professional journalism, accountability	Support to fact-checking, countering disinformation (fake-news), and investigative journalism	1.5	2021
CS development (sub-sectors)	Fight against corruption, rule of Law and democracy watch-dog, gender equality, social and economic rights, social dialogue, culture, green economy, environment, education	a) Support to CS at the grassroots (smaller municipalities) through FSTP (1) b) Action grants (1.5) c) Support to CSO coalitions and networks (1.5) d) FPAs/operating grants (1)	5	2021, 2022, 2023
Cooperation with institutions and enabling environment	Government-CS cooperation framework for enabling environment and the EU perspective; CS-Assembly cooperation; CS engagement in local governance/cooperation with Municipal councils	Support to structured cooperation with GoK, the Assembly and Municipalities	1	2022
CS Development (cross-cutting)	Professional/ethical standards, evidence-based advocacy, gender equality, transparency, constituency building, inter-community cooperation	CS Resource Centre	0.5	2023
Media pluralism	Media resilience against political or external pressure	Support to transparent and professional media outlets, particularly those representing minorities (including through FSTP)	1	2023

Tentative breakdown (in EUR)

2021	2022	2023	Total
3	2	4	9