BELARUS

EU COUNTRY ROADMAP FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

2014 - 2017
Summary

Date of approval/ update:

12 August 2014

1 STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

1.1 ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Most salient issues: basic freedoms, registration and legislation governing access to foreign funding

1.2 PARTICIPATION AND ROLES

Most salient issues: participation of CSOs in policy dialogue and policies limited and informal; CSOs critical of government policies are not invited to participate

Opportunities to be explored: openings toward co-operation between authorities and CSOs

1.3 CAPACITY

Most salient capacity issues: highly fragmented civil society, lack of capacity in internal organisation, management and strategic planning, limited evidence based research and use of it.

Opportunities: some advocacy advances, existing platforms and think tanks.

2 CURRENT EU ENGAGEMENT

2.1 STRUCTURED EU DIALOGUE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

The EU DEL organises formal consultations with civil society before calls for proposals and at the identification stage of annual action programmes for the purpose of setting the country level priorities. Otherwise consultations on co-operation are organised for major policy documents. Governmental NGOs (GONGOs) are currently not included in consultations. However, for creating synergies and avoiding overlapping, the EU considers it a possibility to co-ordinate activities also with them in sectors where they are active in implementing and inspiring public policy.

2.2 LESSONS LEARNT

There is a permanent need to develop capacities of CSOs at a large scale in order for them to acquire new skills, knowledge and lobbying capacities.

Strengthening national and regional Civil Society platforms and connections/links between different organisations remains crucial, as does supporting co-operation between NGOs, academic community, faith based organisations, culture practitioners, and media, amongst others, notably

because competing initiatives make Belarusian CSOs field scattered/uncoordinated. Platforms would have the potential to serve as effective channels to strengthen advocacy effects, but also to build capacity of their members.

The politically less sensitive sectors, those in principle acceptable to the authorities, should be dealt with by organisations capable of working inside Belarus. These organisations should be encouraged to engage in sub-granting to extend assistance to smaller organisations, which are not able to apply for EU funding directly, due to their limited financial capacity.

The combination of the EU and Belarus based organisations working together has proven to be the best from the point of view of capacity development of the Belarusian organisations, transfer of knowledge and skills, and ability to provide high quality results and reporting.

The principle of EU support requires diversification of recipients of our funds to encourage further development of the NGO sector.

3 PRIORITIES

The change we aim at	**PRIORITIES** **Results we would like to achieve/contribute to as the EU**	**INDICATORS** **Measuring progress**	**ACTIONS**
ENABLING ENVIORONMENT (pillar I of Communication)			
Freedom of Association promoted	• The space to operate for CSOs and individuals is enhanced.	• Existence and implementation of laws preserving and promoting the freedoms of assembly, association, expression and media • Level of adherence to International Conventions regarding freedom of association, assembly, expression and media	• through public and silent diplomacy • support to initiatives for basic freedoms
	• The authorities ease the pressure on civil society.	• Number of reported incidents/violations to the freedoms of assembly, association, expression and media	• through public and silent diplomacy • support to human rights defenders
	The authorities simplify and ease the legislation on registration of organisations and funds.	• Number of independent organisations registered per year with comparison to previous years along the whole spectrum of activities • Average number of months	• Public and silent diplomacy

		for registering projects at MoEconomy	

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">CIVIL SOCIETY'S MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN POLICY DIALOGUE AND DOMESTIC POLICIES (pillar II Communication)</td></tr>
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Social accountability mechanisms promoted	• Enhanced interaction between CSOs and relevant State accountability institutions and media	• Existence of oversight bodies including state structures, CSOs and media. • Government and other public service entities provide accurate, relevant, verifiable and timely information and explain actions	• Support to the creation of different kinds of inclusive oversight mechanisms • Support to initiatives improving the transparency of information to civil society and the society in general provided by the state structures
	• Spaces for informal and formal dialogue between CSOs and authorities are promoted and supported.	• Number of policies impacted by CSOs views	• Support to mechanisms that promote the responsiveness of government and other state structures to the views of civil society and the private sector • Increasingly including CSOs into bilateral programme activities
	• Regular dialogue established with the CS actors already working as process facilitators and catalysers between the state and local CSOs.	• Existence of networks of CSOs interest groups mediating between society and the political system for different sectors • Extent of citizen participation through public hearings, commissions and other consultation mechanisms organised by different Line Ministries	• Capacity building of CSOs to act in mediating capacity • Regular dialogue between the EU and the CSOs, and between the EU and the line Ministries for measuring progress of dialogue
Co-production schemes promoted	• Deepening and scaling up the capacity of CSOs and LAs to work constructively together	• Number of joint CSO-LA initiatives supported with EU funds	• Support to the establishment and implementation of joint CSOs and LAs initiatives
	• New trends and innovative experiences in the economic and employment sectors	• Increased level of entrepreneurship as part of GDP • Number of business having corporate social responsibility strategies or activities • Percentage of employment per sector	• Support to job creation, entrepreneurship and philanthropy initiatives

	• Promoting new innovative experiences and trends in social service delivery	• Number and types of CSOs having received governmental support through new law on social service delivery • Percentage of social services delivered by CSOs	• Support to partnerships and co-production of services between CSOs and authorities
CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (pillar III of Communication)			
Local CSOs are legitimate and accountable actors	• Encourage local CSOs' efforts to strengthen their independence, internal governance, transparency and accountability.	• Existence and implementation status of codes of conduct/Internal governance standards/ covenants developed by CSOs	• Support to CSOs setting up internal governance systems/codes of conduct
	• CSOs are encouraged to strengthen their legitimacy vis-à-vis their constituencies.	• Number of supporters of CSOs • Perceived level of popular motivation to participate in civic activities	• Support to expanding CSOs' groups of civil supporters (i.e. volunteers and activists) • Support to efforts motivating the population toward more active civic participation
	• Promote efforts to overcome civil society fragmentation	• Level and quality of join initiatives/campaigns developed and other form of interaction amongst CSOs • Platforms/networks existing and performing well over time	• Support to CSOs' efforts to work together and develop joint initiatives and campaigns
	• Organisations and groups that are still at an early stage of organisational development (e.g. organisations from the periphery and new organisations emerging, etc.) are supported.	• Number of new organisations supported through different EU and MS grant schemes • Amount of sub-granting in EU funded projects	• Sub-granting and partnerships promoted in grant programmes